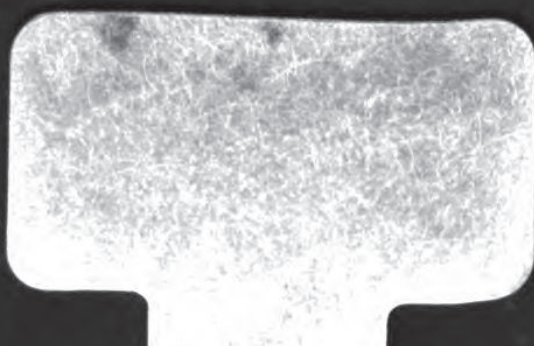
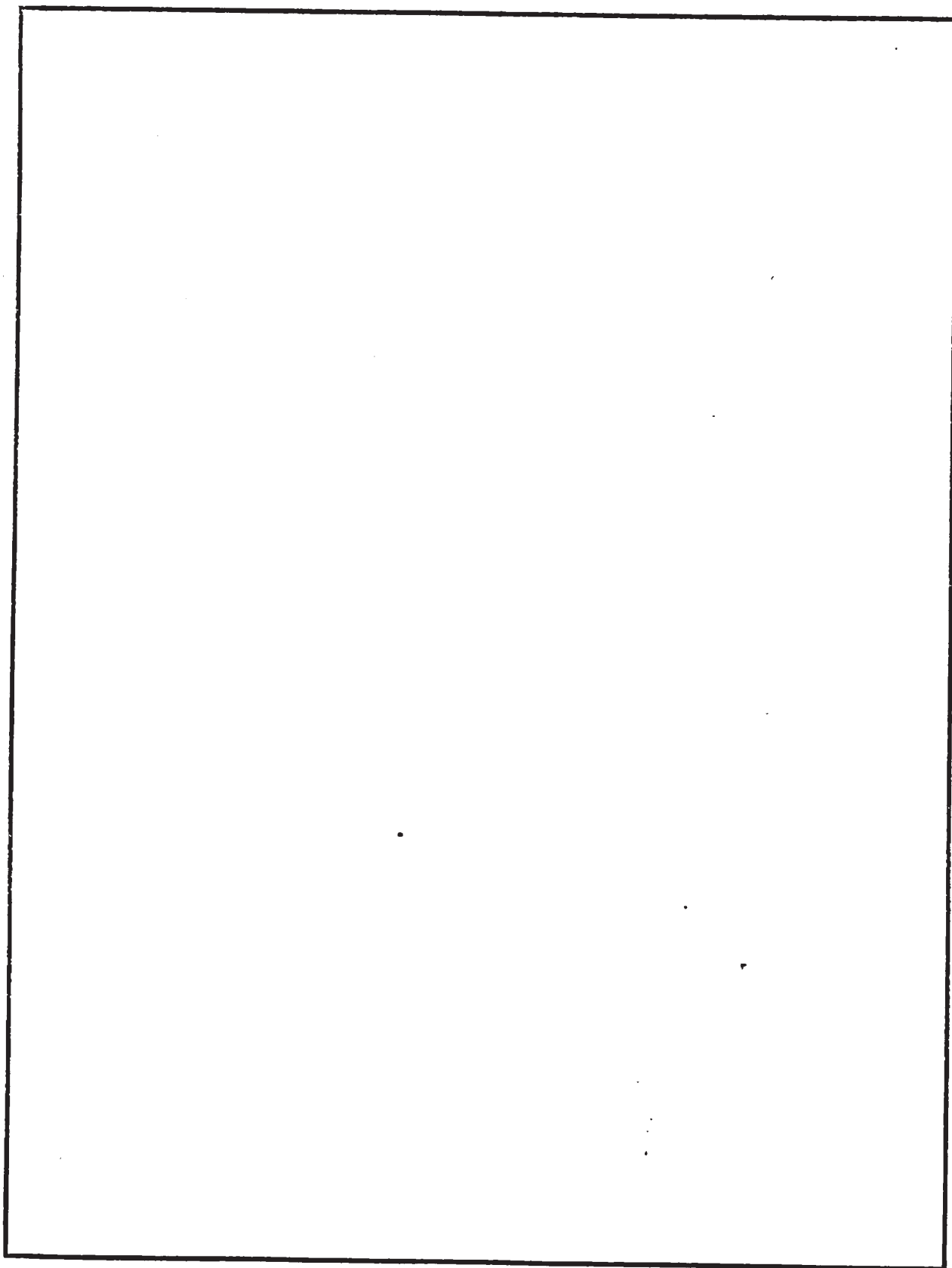




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Thoughts on Holiness



Thoughts on Holiness

BY

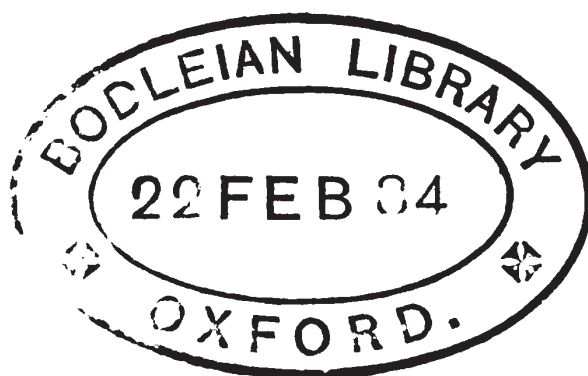
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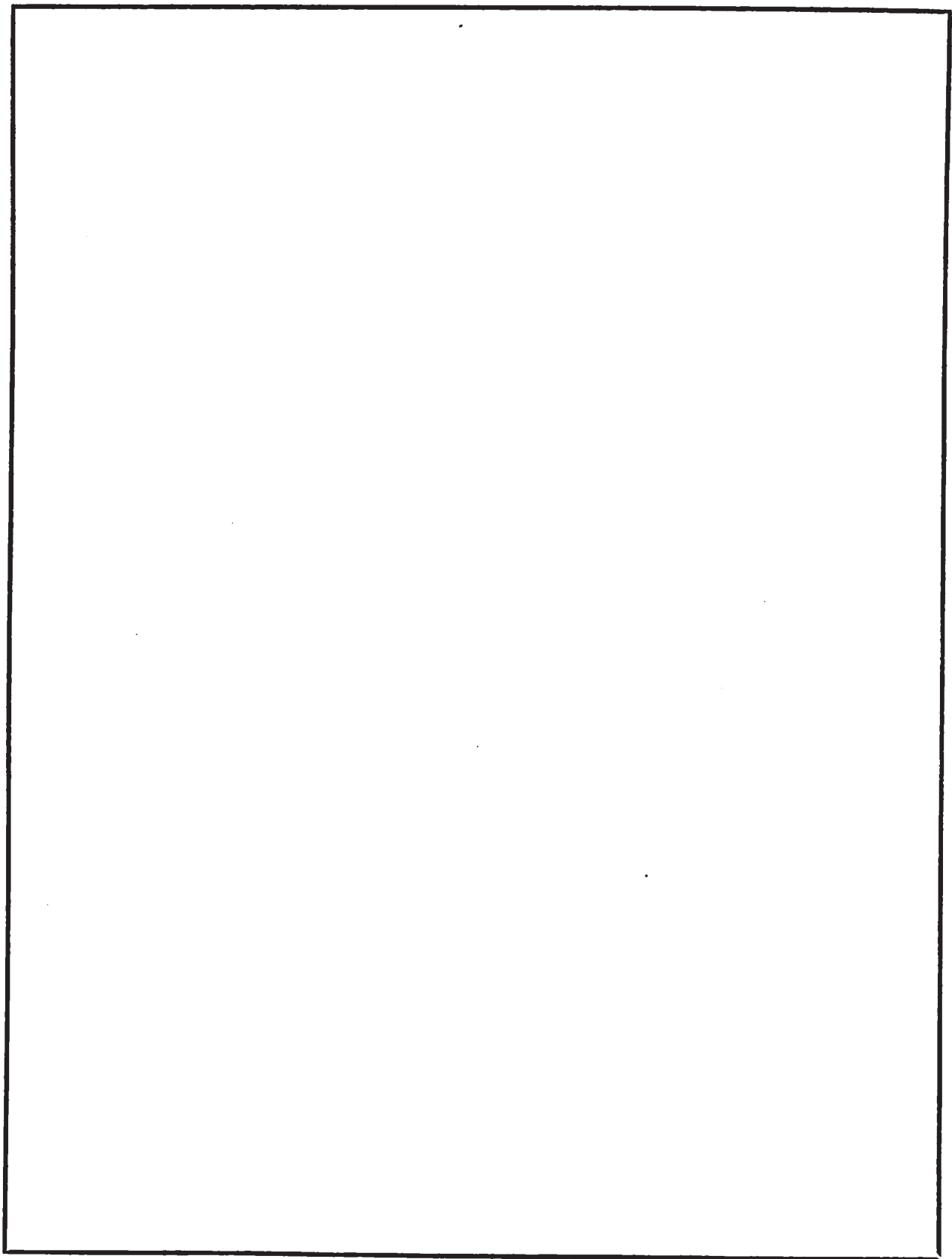
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TO

My Friends at Clifton

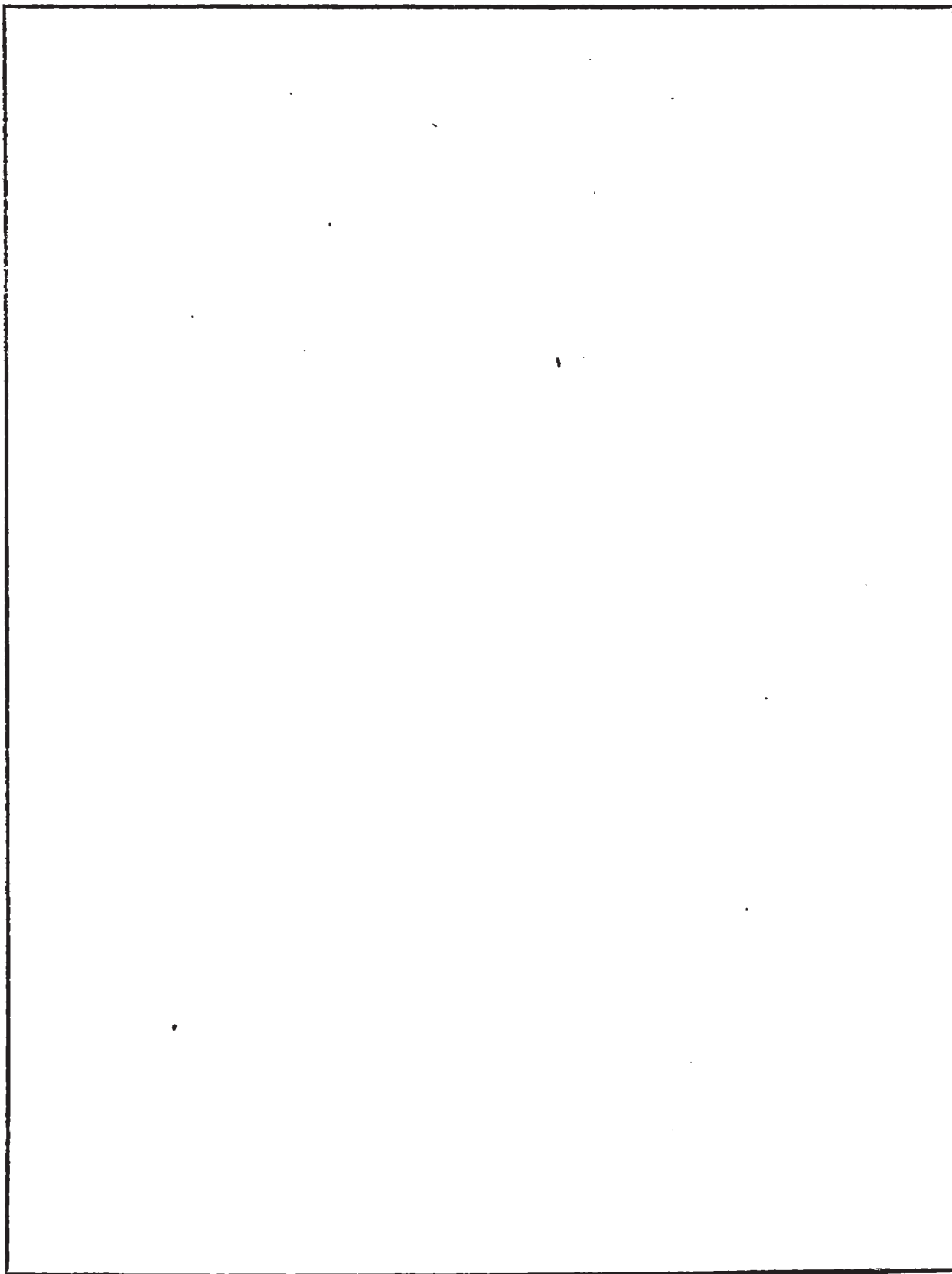
THIS MEMORIAL OF MY MINISTRY AMONG THEM

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED



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The King's Command

B

DEAR READER—Holiness is the Palace wherein dwelleth the high King of Heaven. Bethink thee of thyself—poor, ignorant, sinful. Remember that thou hast no warrant at this door but by the King's grace. Put on thee thy court robes, and draw near in lowly reverence, expecting to meet with Him.

Thou hast no key to unlock the Palace door, for it openeth only from within. Yet, fear not. The King is ever gracious. Ask, and He shall give thee permission to enter. Seek, and thou shalt find. Knock, and the King Himself shall open the door and bid thee welcome.



THOUGHTS ON HOLINESS.



CHAPTER THE FIRST.

The King's Command.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—MATT. v. 48.



AT the outset, here is “perfection.” Perfection taught, perfection encouraged, perfection commanded. The Son of God comes down from heaven to teach us what we should be ; and He bids us be perfect.

Let us look this full in the face. For whilst on the part of some there is an earnest seeking after the light, others get rid of the whole subject

with a flippant or a fierce contempt : “ Oh, I don’t believe in ‘ perfection ! ’ ”

May not this be an awful and even a blasphemous thing to say? You may not believe in this or that man’s way of explaining it. You may differ from everybody’s view of the subject. But perfection as it stands here is not part of any human creed,—*it is the command of God*. Our opinion about it cannot get rid of the word. Here, in its majestic authority, it abideth for ever. But we may bring upon ourselves the penalty of those who neglect the commandment ; perhaps even the greater penalty of those who reject it ; or, possibly, the penalty of those who “ despise ” the word of God.

But beside these are others, very different—earnest and holy people, who have a conscious shrinking from anything that hints at the possibility of perfection. It is to them inseparable from a perilous tendency to spiritual pride, that most miserable and loathsome of all pride. Certainly none of us would like to hear a man say of

himself, "I am perfect." With such a man our terms should be strictly *cash*; he is not the man to have credit.

Yet here is the word of the Lord, and we cannot afford to hold any view which rejects or weakens any utterance of His. Let us try, honestly and earnestly, to get at the meaning of this Scripture, praying for light to see, and grace to be, that which the Master commands.

TO WHOM ARE THE WORDS SPOKEN?

They are not meant for all. The answer is very plainly given—"And seeing the multitude, He went up into a mountain; and when He was set, *His disciples* came unto Him, and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying. . . . Be ye therefore perfect." The words are for His disciples, and for them only.

This is by no means the doctrine with which Christ meets all hearers. In the strong and almost terrible words of this Sermon on the Mount, He warns us against casting pearls before

swine, or giving that which is holy to dogs. We are forbidden to take our treasures to those whom they cannot enrich, or our holy things to those who cannot be blest by them. When the Great Teacher stood in Jerusalem, the stronghold of the Scribes and the Pharisees, He did not bid them be perfect. It was exactly what they thought they were—perfect in their prayers, and their almsgiving, and their robes, and their phylacteries. To them He pours forth the terrible denunciation, “Woe unto you, hypocrites! Woe unto you, blind guides! Ye serpents! Ye generation of vipers! How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?”

At another time there came unto Him “the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.” He did not bid them be perfect—that could only have discouraged them, almost mocked them. Jesus meets them with the gracious and beautiful stories of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Money, and the Prodigal Son.

“*His disciples came unto Him.*” They knew

Him. They loved and trusted Him. They sat at His feet and looked into His face, and listened wondering at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And to them He said, "Be ye perfect." These words, like the whole Sermon on the Mount, require that we come in the disciple-spirit. Not as theorists only; not as curious critics; but as simple, earnest, loving followers of the Lord Jesus. It may be that we come full of mistakes as they were; full of prejudices; with a great many things to learn and a great many things to unlearn—yet coming with boldness, that we may learn of Him.

HERE IS CHRIST'S IDEA OF HIS HOLY RELIGION.

This is what it is to do for us: *It is to make us like God.* This is the aim and purpose of it all.

What is our idea of religion? Very much, one might almost say everything, depends upon the answer. The prayers we offer, the sins we

confess, the standard by which we measure ourselves, the aim and effort of the daily life, all depend upon our thought of what religion is and what it is for.

There is an idea still lingering amongst some that religion is in doing the best we can, and God will do the rest. We must not do anything very outrageous—must not steal or lie, that is, any more than other people do, and then we need not fear. Now, all of us are prepared to condemn severely such a view of religion as that. Such an one has neither part nor lot in the matter. There may be exceptions, but, generally speaking, such a man dare not look into the Bible honestly and find out what the will of God is. He dare not ask himself earnestly what is the meaning of the Cross. He dare not let his thoughts go on to meet the great white Throne where there sitteth the Judge of the whole earth. For such an one the only comfort is to get away from all these uncomfortable things as far as he can.

But amongst many of those who would most

zealously repudiate such a false thought of religion, there is an idea a hundredfold more common, and perhaps a hundredfold more mischievous: *That the death of the Lord Jesus has provided for us an easy escape from the punishment of sin.*

Christ has died for us, and now we are saved—from what? *From hell.* We may be cross, uncharitable, envious, spiteful, but we believe Christ died for us, so of course we are saved.

We perhaps may be given to exaggeration, over-colouring, under-colouring, to suit our prejudice or convenience—but it is all right—we believe that Christ died for us.

We may be eager after gain, as eager as any man of the world; we may be keen and hard at a bargain; swift to take advantage of ignorance or innocence; but there comes in the comfortable explanation, “Of course, you know, we don’t pretend to be perfect, but we believe that Christ died for sinners, the Just for the unjust.”

Now set these two ideas of religion side by

side. The old idea of doing the best you can is a purer, truer, better doctrine than this: That Christ came into the world *for this one thing*—to make it easy for us to be forgiven; that all the great love of God, and the life and death of Christ, and all the round of religious service, are for this one end and purpose—to *save us from hell*. Christ has taken away the penalty of sin—never mind about its power! Christ has borne the curse of sin; but the source and cause of it is left!

Surely it were better Christ had never come at all. This is to make Him a very cloak and minister of sin. He who brings down Christ's holy religion to such a level can never have looked with any care into the Scriptures; he can never have seen the real horror of sin; he can never have learnt the meaning of the Cross. This is to make the Cross of Christ of none effect—and worse. Surely it was such as these who stirred Paul's soul to indignant grief, so that he could only speak of them with tears. "For many walk, of

whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ."

What saith the Scripture? "His name shall be called *Jesus*, for He shall save His people *from their sins*." "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." Why? That He might save it from the future punishment of sin? No. "That He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish."

We lift our eyes to Calvary and think, "It is finished ; my debt is paid ; the law is satisfied." That is true—blessedly true. But though salvation begin there, it cannot end there. The death of the Saviour is not a great legal transaction outside me, which was finished long ago. Paul leads us up the hill again, and points us to the Cross. *I am crucified with Christ*. Paul himself hangs there, hands and feet yielded up to the

crucifixion, and the old life of sin and self dead and buried with Christ.

What ! has the glorious Son of God died that I may find a light and ready excuse for my self-indulgence ? that I may live an indolent, easy-going life ? Again the grip of the Apostle's hand is upon us. Again he hurries up to that great scene of Calvary. "*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*"

What ! has Christ died to save me from hell, and now I can be eager for the world, and its honours, and its gain, and its coveted positions of eminence, even as others ! Once more Paul takes us up in sight of the crucified Saviour, and in an outburst of passionate protest and entreaty cries, "*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*" To know Christ is this—we dare not make it less than this—to know the power of God in us overcoming sin, and self, and the world. To know Christ is to be in the blessed mystery of oneness

with Him,—crucified with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him in newness of life, seated together with Him in the heavenly places. In one word, it is gathered up in this command, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

This, then, is Christ's idea of His holy religion. It is to make men like God, corresponding to Him, answering to Him. This is the aim and end of every part of it—to make men think as God thinks ; to make men will as God wills ; to make men do as God commands.

To think as God thinks—that is, to love God with all the mind.

To will as God wills—that is, to love God with all the heart.

To do what God commands—that is, to love God with all the strength.

And not only of Christianity is this the great aim. It is impossible to think of any true religion of which this is not the purpose—to be like God. This is religion in the angels ; this was the religion

of Paradise—a power sustaining and developing the likeness of God. This was the whole aim of the Jewish religion. Christianity is one with all these in its purpose.

But Christianity differs from all these in—

The way in which that purpose is to be fulfilled.

The Son of God becomes the son of man that through Him the sons of men may become the sons of God. The great revelation that Christ makes is not of God only, but of God as OUR FATHER. This is the text of the Sermon on the Mount, “Your Father, which is in heaven.” And in that new relationship lie these new and infinite possibilities. The relationship between God and Israel was the relation of a covenant. God was the God of Abraham; Israel was the seed of Abraham. Our relationship to God is the relationship of *a new nature*. Born of God, we are His children, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Here lies the glorious possibility of perfection: “Be ye there-

fore perfect, even as YOUR FATHER which is in heaven is perfect." Dwell upon it until the thoughts are filled with the mighty wonder of it, and the heart glows with an adoring love, and all the soul is thrilled with its boundless promise. Not in any figure, but in very act and deed they that are Christ's are "begotten of God ;" "partakers of the Divine Nature." Accept it as the pledge of an infinite blessedness. Herein lies not only the possibility of perfection, but the ground of this command and demand. This new and closer relationship of sons has new claims upon us. God as our Father has a right to a full obedience, to a hearty and entire confidence, to a perfectly loving service. He calls upon us to live in the enjoyment of our high and holy privilege. Hence all the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. Christ is "not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil," to make it possible by this new relationship for us to keep it perfectly—to turn the *thou shalt* of the table of stone into the *I will* of the new heart.

And because we are sons we are brought into a new relationship to each other, with new duties and new opportunities of mutual service. Of old time men were neighbours ; now that we are the children of God every man becomes a brother ; and the friendliness of old is to be quickened and kindled into a brotherly love, with forbearance and gentleness and generous self-sacrifice.

This, then, is holiness ; *the healthy development of this divine nature that is within us*. Born of God, we have the beginning of a life in which lies all the possibility and promise of a perfect likeness to God. Holiness is the steady and healthy growth of this new life. It may be a "second blessing ;" it may be a two-hundred-and-twenty-second blessing. It may be sought after with an agony of endeavour ; it may be a simple, glad, unconscious effort that just pleases Jesus all day long, because it seems as if love cannot help it. It may be a rapture ; it may be a conflict ; it may be a gloom. Mark—it may be ! Holiness may go with all these—and it *may* go without any of

them. For holiness is simply *a perfectly healthy religious life*. By faith in the Lord Jesus, and by the gracious energy of the Holy Ghost, you are born of God ;—*now live*.

“Live,” you say—“is that all ! I live without any trouble. I eat and drink, and sleep, and live. This is a very short and easy cut to holiness.”

Is it so ? Think of all that life means. *Air, food, light, warmth, society, exercise, rest*. Let the spiritual life within us have these as freely and ungrudgingly as we give them to the bodily life, and holiness asks no more. Breathing the atmosphere of communion with God—the breath of God ; desiring the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby ; walking in the light as He is in the light ; warmed with the glowing love of Jesus filling the soul ; running gladly in the way of His commandments ; resting in the care of the gracious Lord Who careth for us—this is to ensure the all-round development of the life of God within us.

Yet again, think of all that life means. The

getting up in the morning, and all the philosophy of being clothed. The breakfast, compassing two worlds that you may have a cup of tea. Then business—letters and telegrams ; the markets, with the anxious scanning of appearances ; the manufacture, with its trained skill and caution ; the money-making and the money-losing—life means all this. Dinner, with all the hundred hands that have toiled to feed us ; the harvest of the ages meets us in the commonest crust of bread. The home, with all its arrangements, domestic, social, sanitary.

Holiness means that *in all this round of life we SEEK FIRST the Kingdom of God and His righteousness*. So thinking and purposing and doing that everywhere the life of God within us shall have freedom and opportunity for growth ; much more that it shall be kept from the blight of the world's east wind and frost, and from being trodden under foot and crushed in the crowd of cares. This first ; not gain, not honour, not pleasure. First in all things *to be like God*.

This it is which marks us off from others as the sons of God. "Be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed, *for after these things do the Gentiles seek.*" This is the sign of the heathen, "But *seek ye first* His Kingdom and His righteousness." Now are we the sons of God, and therefore citizens of another city—which hath foundations. Born again, the objects and aims of our life have been transferred; the affections set on things above. We are natives of the Heavenly Country, subject to its laws, claiming its privileges,—not the mere promise of future blessedness is it that we enjoy, but we are *now* the freemen of the Celestial City, having a voice and influence in its high affairs; having a share in its prosperity; having a keen regard for the honour of its King, and an eager love for His service. What others find in this present world, in its pleasures, honours, gains, we are to find in the Kingdom of our Father. How soon should this world come to believe in that other world when

its citizens set before them first His Kingdom ! How soon should men believe in Him if we set foremost His righteousness—that always supreme, and all things else so ordered as to secure that !

Holiness, then, is simply this : *perfect health of soul*. And what is perfect health anywhere, in anything ? It cannot be other than this—*perfect reception and perfect distribution of all that life depends upon*.

“CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE,” PERFECTLY RECEIVED for forgiveness, for deliverance, for victory, for all.

“CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE,” PERFECTLY DISTRIBUTED over the home and the business, throughout the thoughts and wishes and words and deeds.

This is holiness. This reception checked, then at once the life is a sickly one. This reception stopped, then the sickness is unto death.

The Starting Point

*THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD
WITH ALL THY HEART.—The living Word Himself
must come to bring this first and great Commandment.
The tone and emphasis do more than express or im-
press—they interpret. We need sit at His feet and
hear these words from His own lips. He only makes
them clear. He only makes them possible.*

*Thou shalt.—It may be the bidding of mere
authority. But love cannot be forced. Love owns no
authority but love's own. From His lips these words
become a gracious and glorious promise. To hear
them from Him is to begin their fulfilment.*

*It is only when He shows us the Father that
obedience is possible.*

*Only love seeks love.—He is altogether love
Whose highest will concerning me is summed up thus.*

*Only love wins love.—He is altogether lovable
Who seeks the whole strength of my love.*

*Only love satisfies love.—He must love me with
all His love Who asks my whole love for His own.*



CHAPTER THE SECOND.

The Starting Point.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as *your Father which is in heaven* is perfect.”—MATT. v. 48.

THERE are many earnest religious people who cannot help feeling that there is a lack somewhere in their religious life, for which they cannot account. That it should be so is a grief to them and a perplexity—yet so it is. Instead of finding that religion cures all their cares, it is the one great burden which wearies them most. Instead of healing other failures, as it certainly ought to do, it is the one thing in which they do most grievously fail. Everything in the Word encourages the hope that

religion will bring a new life, an abiding strength, a confidence, and joy ; but instead of that it seems only to bring to them a sadder sense of weakness and troubled doubts.

Is it possible for us just to put our finger upon the source of the mischief? I think it is. Let us claim the help of that blessed Spirit Who searcheth the deep places of the soul.

We have come pretty generally to this point, that the ground of our salvation is not in doing, nor in feeling, nor even in faith : the ground of our salvation is the finished work of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ—faith is only the beggar's hand that takes it.

But the old subtle life of looking to ourselves is not dead because we have given it up in one particular. It lives on vigorously and tyrannises over us in a great many ways. It underlies our prayers ; it fills us with chilly fears and fevers of doubt ; it makes our hopes as variable as the weather or the state of our health.

Here is the great source of the mischief :

WE THINK WE MUST MAKE GOD LOVE US BY BEING GOOD.

If we are good—good enough—God will love us ; but if we are not good enough, what hope is there ? Said one of my little ones to the youngest, in that threatening tone which is usually adopted in teaching, “You must be good, you know, or father won’t love you.” That is how we think of God and how we live toward Him. We are always trying to be good enough to make Him love us ; and, of course, to do that one must be *very, very* good ! Then comes again the troubled sigh over the dreary round of failure. “You see, I am so dreadfully bad ; so unlike other people. I have so little faith ; no love ; no earnestness ; nothing !” Here is the black source of this misery.

“You must be good, or father won’t love you,” said the little one. Then I called him to myself as God seeks to call us, and I said, gravely and tenderly, “Do you know what you have said ? It is not true, my boy—not a bit true.”

"Isn't it?" said the little one, surprised and doubtful.

"No," I said; "it is far away from the truth."

"But you won't love us if we are not good, will you?" he asked.

"Yes," I said; "I can't help loving you. I shall love you for ever and ever, because I can't help it. When you are good I shall love you with a love that makes me glad; and when you are not good I love you with a love that hurts me; but I can't help loving you, *because I am your father, you know.*"

"*Your Father which is in heaven.*" Alas! we speak it only as the utterance of a reverential homage. We think of it as a figure borrowed from an earthly life, and only in some faint and shallow meaning to be used of God. We are afraid to take God as our own tender and pitiful father. He is a schoolmaster, or almost further off than that, and knowing less about us—an inspector, who knows nothing of us except through our lessons. His eyes are not on the scholars,

but on the book, and all alike must come up to the standard.

Let us look into the school. Here is one thoughtless and indolent, the lessons neglected for everything—when he comes up to the master no wonder he hangs his head and is full of confusion. Here is another dreaming, as people dream in hearing sermons, the mind wandering for half an hour, then waking up suddenly to find that the time is gone and the lesson unlearned. Here is another who does try at the sum, but it will come wrong, try and try as he may. Here beside him is another who sees the mistake and gets it right without any trouble at all. But the master knows nothing about trouble, he only looks at the answer. Here is the poor little maiden, God bless her, who has to be the mother at home, the mistress of the poor household, to see to all the family,—is it any wonder that her thoughts are flying from the lessons back to other cares? but the master knows nothing about that as he calls her to himself. Here is the lad who has failed so often that he

has given up trying. Here is a dull little scholar, born of dull parents, for half-a-dozen generations, who finds every task so dreadfully hard. Here is the clever boy who knows it all at a glance and says it. Here is the poorly little one with the headache and weariness, trying to keep back the tears that tremble in her eyes. All of them, dull and clever, weak and strong, anxious and easy—all are brought to the same lesson, the master measuring them not by themselves, but by the answers and the tasks.

Oh, I know those scholars ; so do you. It is just the picture of our trying to serve God—trying to bring what He has commanded ; the dull scholar, and the anxious scholar, and the poor, weak, tired scholar, all getting up the tasks, and in it all burdened with the fear of failure and of being “turned.”

Now the school is over. Home they come, bounding with glee. All the restraint gone, the troublesome lessons are done with, the fear of failure is forgotten. Why? They are at home

now. *This is the Father's house and love is here.* Ah, there is that lazy, thoughtless scholar, was there ever such a boy to work? And he who was dreaming, look how his eyes flash; he is all eagerness, and tenderness, and care. But this is harder work than lessons or sums? No! there is no work in it, it is only *doing something for mother.* Oh, the magic of love!

Here is the anxious little maiden; it is no burden to toil; there is no sigh over it now. It is for those she loves. Here comes the dull, slow child, she forgets all about her not being clever,—her father loves her as much as the clever one every bit. Ah, and here is the sum that would not come right, with the master's cross drawn right down the slate. The father hears all about it and takes the little fellow on his knee, and holds the little hand in his and tracks the mistake up to its beginning and gets the answer right triumphantly. "There, you have done it at last!" says the father, cheerily. "Oh, yes, father, I could do anything when you help me like that," cries the

lad, wondering if he shall ever be so clever. Home comes the little one who is poorly, and love sees at once the drooping eye and the heavy head, and soothes it with tender pity.

Now open the ears of the heart, timid child of God ; let it go sinking right down in the innermost depths of the soul. Here is the starting point of holiness, in the love and patience and pity of our heavenly Father. We have not to learn to be holy as a hard lesson at school, that we may make God think well of us ; we are to learn it at home with the Father to help us. God loves you, not because you are clever, not because you are good ; He loves you because He is *your Father*. The Cross of Christ does not make God love us : it is the outcome and measure of His love to us. He loves all His children, the clumsiest, the dullest, the ugliest, the worst of His children. His love lies at the back of everything, and we must get upon that as the solid foundation of our religious life, not growing up into that, but growing up *out of it*. We must begin there, or our beginning

will come to nothing. Do take hold of this mightily. We must go out of ourselves for any hope, or any strength, or any confidence. And what hope, what strength, what confidence may be ours now that we can begin here, *Your Father which is in heaven !*

We need to get in at the tenderness and helpfulness which lie in these words, and to rest upon it—*Your Father*. Speak them over to yourself until something of the wonderful truth is felt by us. It means that I am bound to God by the closest and tenderest relationship; that I have a right to His love and His power and His blessing, such as nothing else could give me. Oh, the boldness with which we can draw near! Oh, the great things we have a right to ask for! *Your Father*. It means that all His infinite love and patience and wisdom bend over *me* to help *me*. In this relationship lies not only the possibility of holiness: there is infinitely more than that.

The story is told of one of our most gifted poets, that when a little lad of six he was sent to

what was called a "charity" school. Sensitive and timid, frightened at the master's look and voice, and at the cane, without which nothing was done in those times, he could only tremble over his lesson and blunder tearfully instead of saying it, going back beaten and bewildered to try again. Little wonder that he came to think himself as stupid as the master said he was, and despaired of ever knowing anything. At last the master's patience was exhausted, the scoldings and the canings were alike in vain. Seizing the little fellow angrily, he thrust him out of the school and sent him home as too dull to learn anything. The frightened child hid himself in his mother's arms and sobbed out all his grief. Then she sat beside him and patiently taught him his letters, and bore with a hundred failures, and praised his occasional success, and so led him on until he was a scholar almost before he knew it.

Here we are to begin, in the patient love of our Father. Think how He knows us apart and by ourselves, in all our peculiarities, and in all our

weaknesses and difficulties. The Master judges by the result, but our Father judges by the effort. Failure does not always mean fault. He knows how much things cost, and weighs them where others only measure. YOUR FATHER. Think how great store His love sets by the poor beginnings of the little ones, clumsy and unmeaning as they may be to others. All this lies in this blessed relationship, and infinitely more. Do not fear to take it all as your own.

Perfect even as YOUR FATHER. Holiness is no exceptional privilege to which only the inner circle of God's favourites are admitted. It is the *right* of all His children. It is no height to be reached only by some few adventurous spirits of rare endurance and daring ; it is the highway to the Father's house. It is ours by inheritance, the blessed portion of goods that falleth to us. *Holiness is the natural life of our new birth.* The moment we are in Christ the eternal purpose of all things in heaven and in earth leads up to this end, that we should be holy and without blame

before Him in love. If I am the child of God, all the wisdom and love and righteousness of the Father, all the great salvation which is in Christ and Him crucified, all the energies of the Holy Spirit, all the arrangements of the daily life, are mine to minister to my holiness. "*All things* work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." To what good? Not for our ease and luxury and self-indulgence, as we think and hope in our blindness, but for the highest, the only good—"For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON." So God meets us on His side. How shall we meet Him on our side?

O for an enthusiasm for holiness!—a passionate and absorbing ambition to be like Christ in thought and word and deed;—to live over again the life of Christ in doing the will of God and in serving others; in courage and in patience; in great brotherliness and in utter self-forgetfulness; in restful faith and in consuming zeal; in

the abiding consciousness of God's love and in sight of the dread realities of the judgment and its eternal issues ; in tender compassion for the fallen, and in deepest abhorrence of sin.

Let us pray and wait for the gift of the Holy Ghost, Who is come to make us realise this relationship in all its glorious fulness, by Whom the love of God becomes much more than a thought—a blessed possession, *shed abroad in the heart*. “The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” And how ready is the Father to give us this gift divine ! “If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall YOUR FATHER which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him !”

YOUR FATHER. It is in the deep reality of this relationship that there lies the possibility of Holiness. It is in the tenderness and wisdom and faithfulness of the Father that we find the blessed *hope* and *pledge* of Holiness.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath

bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God : and such we are. . . . Beloved, NOW ARE WE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is. And EVERY ONE THAT HATH THIS HOPE SET ON HIM purifieth himself, even as He is pure."



**Christ leads us into the Highway
of Holiness.**

ALL these provisions and promises are for me.

The gracious Master seeks no better material in which to work out His high purposes than He finds in me.

Cold, hard, dead, selfish I may be,—slow to see the way, and slower still to walk in it ; beset with what I reckon hindrances ; yet the moment I yield myself wholly to Him all hindrances end. The only hindrance is in my will.

“ Learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart ; ” —of which saith Matthew Henry tenderly, “ He is meek, and can have compassion on the ignorant, whom others would be in a passion with. Many able teachers are hot and hasty, which is a great discouragement to those who are dull and slow ; but Christ knows how to bear with such, and to open their understandings. . . . He is lowly in heart. He condescends to teach poor scholars, to teach novices ; He chose disciples not from the courts nor the schools, but from the sea-side. Who teaches like Him ? It is an encouragement to put ourselves to school to such a Teacher.”



CHAPTER THE THIRD.

Christ leads us into the Highway of Holiness.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—MATT. v. 48.

LOOK at THE RAW MATERIAL out of which Christ makes His saints. We have heard the command of our Master —“Be ye therefore perfect.” At once we have looked within us and sighed a troubled sigh. Everything there is against us—disappointment and failure meet us everywhere. No faith ; no earnestness ; no love ; no strength of purpose ; self spoiling every thought ; sin creeping over our holiest things ; so much of ill-temper and indolence and worldliness—everything bad. “Not

for me," we think : " this high life is far away out of my reach. I am not able to meet the demands of lowest duty and commonest claims of religion ; with nothing good, nothing wise, nothing fair, a place stript of everything but confusion and failure—this is no palace for the King." And, lo, at the threshold standeth the King Himself. " This is the place I seek," saith He ; " Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Thank God that is where holiness begins. Not in our strength and goodness, but in our poverty and emptiness. Set that in the forefront of the thoughts, as it is here in the forefront of the Lord's Sermon. Holiness is not a rapturous triumph away up somewhere in vague heights of glory, steadfast and splendid like a sun. It is just a poor heart that makes room for Jesus.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Did we not agree that this perfection was likeness to God—correspondence to God ? Here is the beginning of this correspondence : My emptiness answering

to His fulness. What God seeks in the world is room. "There was no room for Him in the inn"—well, then the manger shall have Him, and the bleak shed where the cattle lie. Lowliness and poverty cannot shut Him out if there is but room. This is ever the first step in discipleship, coming down to be low and poor enough. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."

And do not think of this only as an entrance-gate into discipleship which we must pass at the outset, but which is ever left farther behind as we get farther on. Being poor in spirit is always the first condition of perfection, however far on we go, and whatever we attain to, a con-

dition ever deepening as we receive. Then am I poorest in spirit when I am fullest of God.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. How can it be otherwise? Whatever I have of myself is so much independence of Jesus—for all that I can do without Him.

But if I have nothing, I must beg of Him. If I have nothing, I must accept His gifts. If I have nothing, I must depend upon Him for everything.

Oh, blessed poverty! Put that together, dear soul. *Begging of Jesus. Taking from Jesus. Depending on Jesus.* That is the A B C of holiness. This poverty of spirit is unfolded in the verses that follow. Let us note well every feature of it.

Do you say that if conscious emptiness and failure are the first conditions of holiness, then are many of the world's worst nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven than some of the Church's first? Well, that is what the Master told us long ago, that drunkards and harlots shall go into the king-

dom of God before the Pharisee—the self-satisfied. But to the true disciple this failure is a source of deep and bitter grief. The thought of all that sin has wrought within the soul fills us with an upbraiding mournfulness; no excuse can lessen it, no explanation lighten it. There is a right consciousness of this poverty—*Blessed are they that mourn.*

Blessed are the meek. This is constantly associated with a willingness to learn. We are to receive with meekness the engrafted Word. A quiet teachableness is the next mark of the disciple. We put down preference and prejudice and stout self-will, and we sit longing to hear the Master's voice. Here again is the correspondence: Christ's eagerness to teach, met by a spirit that is eager to learn.

Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness. God's yearning to give met by my great longing to receive.

Then, in the disciple, this poverty begets a pity for all. My failure is to compel in me a patient

and merciful thought of others. *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.* There is to be in all things a single and steady aim after the right and true (ver. 8). *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.* And that with a gentle spirit that neither avenges nor resents. *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.* *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Yet with a courage which bravely endures persecution for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (vers. 9, 10, 11).

SEE WHERE THE DISCIPLE IS FOUND.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.—These words can only be rightly heard when we are in the right attitude. They bless us only when we hear them from the great Teacher Himself.

At the beginning of this chapter there are two words that should be underlined in our Bibles and deeply graven in the memory and heart. "His

disciples came UNTO HIM, and He opened His mouth and taught them. . . . Be ye therefore perfect."

UNTO HIM. We separate the word from Him, and so we lose it. Christ's teaching is always *viva voce*—He opens His mouth and teaches us. This is the reason why the reading of the Bible and the hearing it are so often but dead and dreary forms. We forget to come *unto Him*. Then the precept is no more the gracious Word proceeding out of His mouth ;—it is shrunk and shrivelled into a mere opinion of the preacher's ; the commandment is either a wearisome utterance, or else it is a grievous burden which we strive vainly to carry, for *without* Him we can *do* nothing ; the promises, if we hear them at all, are but faint echoes that come to us from afar, bringing no healing, breathing no virtue. But we come UNTO HIM. Then the precept is full of a Divine authority ; then the commandment is full of a tenderness and love which make it a glowing promise ; and at His Feet, within reach of that Hand, the promise is

transformed into a blessed inwrought possession.

No man may be able to tell me altogether *what* holiness is, but what of that? I know *where* it is—*just at the Master's feet*.

Sit down, dear soul, sit down at His feet; look up into His face. By the height and depth, the length and breadth of the cross, try to measure the vast purposes of His love, and the immensity of His grace to help. Then from His lips hear the words, infinitely tender and full of power: *Be ye therefore perfect*.

He who thinks of holiness as a something in himself, at once limits it by all kinds of measurements and mismeasurements of what he is and is not; and of the tall sons of Anak and of the size of Jericho's walls; and feebleness whispers, "We are but as grasshoppers."

But if holiness is a power in my Almighty Lord—His power to help and bless me—where are its limits? Who can measure that?

Do let this truth sink down into the soul's

depths : *Holiness is all in Jesus, and we can find it nowhere else.* YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM.

Once I went forth to look for *Repentance*. I sought her day and night in the City of Mansoul. I asked many if they knew where she dwelt, and they said they had never seen her. I met one, grave and scholarly, who told me what she was like, and bade me seek her earnestly ; but he did not tell me where she was to be found. Then, all sad at heart, and wearied with my search, I went forth without the city walls, and climbed a lonely hill, and up a steep and rugged way, until I came in sight of the Cross, and of Him who hung thereon. And lo, as I looked upon Him, there came one and touched me. Then instantly my heart was melted, and all the great deeps of my soul were broken up.

“Ah, Repentance, I have been looking everywhere for you,” I said.

“Thou wilt always find me here,” said Repentance ; “here, in sight of my crucified Lord. I tarry ever at His feet.”

Again I went forth, to look for *Forgiveness*. I knocked at many a door in the City of Mansoul and asked for her. And some said they thought she did live there *sometimes*; and some said she used to, once; and some said she came there occasionally when the weather was fine to spend a Sunday. Then up came one whom I knew by name as Unbelief, with a voice like the croaking of a raven, and he said that Forgiveness never was there and never would be, that she was much too fine a lady to live in so low a place as that and among such a set as they were. So I came forth wearied and sad; and as I reached the city gate I met again the grave scholar, and he gave me much account of her birth and parentage, and he showed me her portrait, and told me of her gracious works, and he bade me seek her earnestly, but he did not tell me where I could find her.

So I went along my way, looking, but well-nigh in despair, when it chanced that I found myself again upon the high hill, climbing again the steep and rugged path. And I lifted my eyes

and saw once more the Cross and Him Who hangeth thereon, and lo, at the first sight of my dear Lord, Forgiveness met me, and filled my soul with holy peace, and a rest like heaven itself.

“Oh, I have had a weary search for you,” I said.

“I am always here,” said Forgiveness ; “here at my Master’s feet.”

Long afterwards I wondered within myself where *Holiness* dwelt, but I feared to go in search of her. I knew she would never be at home in the low lands and busy streets of Mansoul. All whom I asked about her answered doubtfully. One said that she had died long ago ; indeed, was buried in Eden before Adam came out. One said that she lived away at the end of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, her house was on the brink of the river, and that I must hope to meet with her just before I crossed it. Another argued almost angrily against this notion. “Nay,” said he, “she lives farther on still ; search as thou wilt, thou shalt never find her till thou art safely across

the river and landed on the shores of the Celestial City."

Then I remembered how well I had fared aforetime on that Holy Hill, and went forth again. So up the lonely way I went, and reached the top of it and looked once more upon my blessed Saviour. And lo! there was Holiness sitting at the Master's feet. I feared to say that I had been looking for her, but as I gazed upon the Crucified, and felt the greatness of His love to me, and as all my heart went out in love and adoration, Holiness rose up, and came to me all graciously, and said, "I have been waiting for thee ever since thy first coming."

"Waiting where?" I asked, wondering.

"At His feet," said Holiness. "I am always there."

THE NEXT GREAT STEP IN HOLINESS.

On our part it is *the* great step. He who takes this will at once find himself on the high level. Read carefully the thirteenth and four-

teenth verses of this fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

Ye are the salt of the earth. . . . Ye are the light of the world. Of these words it is most true that we can hear them aright only when we are at His feet. Not only to feel their force must we come *unto Him*, but thus only can we get in at their meaning at all.

So let us come to Jesus—on the mountain slope, under the clear sky in which perhaps the rosy hues of the sunrise yet linger, for it would seem probable that it was in the early hours of the day that Jesus had gone up from the multitudes and gathered His disciples about Him. Let us venture to join them in that sweet and hallowed communion, for we, too, have learned to love and trust Him as our Lord and Master.

Jesus looks upon the little company of His disciples, and His heart goes out toward them. Away from the turmoil of the crowd and the pressure of the people, He sits and rests in their midst. In them He finds a trust that refreshes

Him. They bring Him a confident love that soothes and gladdens Him. They are beginning to understand something of the purpose of His coming ; faintly, perhaps, but still discerning the spiritual and eternal, where others only saw the coarse outside.

But all this—the rest and refreshment and gladness—is quickly overborne by another thought, another feeling in the heart of the Great Redeemer. There was one mighty feeling and thought which drew all into itself, as the rivers are drawn to the sea. And these words are opened to us only when we can enter into that great feeling with a sympathy close and tender and clear-seeing ; for love is the gift of insight.

Here, at His feet, think with adoring reverence Who He is, and whence He comes—the glorious Son of God, from the eternal throne. Think of the purpose which brings Him here, and how that all the consciousness of Christ is wrapped about this purpose—*The glory of His Father in the salvation of the world.* For this He in Whom all

fulness dwells has emptied Himself. For this the King of Glory has taken upon Him the form of a servant. For this the Lord and Giver of Life is on His way to death, even the death of the cross. And now, as all within Him throbs and glows with the intensity of this purpose, He looks again upon His disciples. In them He has a new power to glorify His Father and to bless the world. *Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world.* Ye are My disciples, receiving My spirit, that I through you may check corruption, and bring sweetness and purity. I have kindled you that you may be consumed in lighting and blessing others.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Holiness is in likeness to God. Let us try to enter into the meaning of those words—almost more wonderful than any that earth has ever heard—GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

Sit again at the feet of the glorious King of Heaven, and hear Him declare: THE SON OF GOD CAME NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, BUT TO MINISTER, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.

We are so to surrender ourselves to Christ that this great purpose of His coming shall claim and possess the whole life. We are to live like God, to bless others. "Ye are My disciples," saith the Master—but not for your own sakes, not that you may be safe and comfortable, but that I, through you, may glorify the Father in blessing and saving others.

We need to stay awhile and let this go sinking down into the soul, filling it, musing until the fire is kindled.

It is perhaps a hard saying. It condemns us in our easy-going forgetfulness of others, and well it may. To think of fruit like this proves the sickly plant of our piety! We turn from this high demand to find only failure everywhere: a life that begins and ends with self and never ventures far enough to lose sight of it.

But come again to the only resting-place. Tarry at His feet, and hear the words from His gracious lips : " Ye are the salt of the earth. . . . Ye are the light of the world." This is His will, His purpose concerning us. This is what His power waits to do for us. And this, too, is the claim of His great love upon us. Do not sigh a poor assent to the truth of it, and then pass by neglectfully on the other side. Do not think about it and pray about it, without even a passing hope that the prayer will be answered. Do not gather yourself up in great resolutions to be good and useful. Kneel in sight of the Crucified. In the cross of Christ spell out His great purpose and yearning love to men. Let the heart feel all the might of the appeal that comes to us from those torn Hands and Feet and bleeding Brow, from all the dreadful shame and agony of our dear Lord. And bought and bound by all this, surrender yourself to Him for His great purpose. Take Him as your strength for this life-work—to be the salt of the earth ; the light of the world.

The first great step in holiness is the Lord Himself coming down to our low level—*Blessed are the poor in spirit*. And this is the second step, Christ lifting us up to His high level—*Ye are the salt of the earth ; ye are the light of the world*.

For Christ's sake and in Christ's strength, this, then, is our life work.

Salt of the earth. It is the noiseless power of a good life, making all about us pure and blessed, not by great fuss and ado, not even by preaching, still less by scolding, but just by *being Christ-like*. Yet by no means a weak amiability that is scarcely felt : *salt*—a very quick and sharp unpleasantness to those whose moral life is chapped and cracked, dreadfully in the way of those who want to be wrong.

Salt of the earth. He who thinks that religion has nothing to do with politics, with business, with pleasure, is ignorant of the whole meaning of religion. It is a power right in the midst of all these, sweetening and purifying them all. Think of this as holiness—not rapture, not glowing and

glorious experiences ; but in Christ's strength and for Christ's sake, setting ourselves to sweeten and purify the life about us.

In the story of old, when the water was bitter and the land was barren, the prophet took a cruse of salt and cast it into the spring. At once the fountain was healed, and the land became fruitful. Christ's true disciple is just such a cruse of salt in the Master's hand, one whose presence has power to heal life's bitterness, making the water of life sweet for those about us, and planting the waste and desolate places of life with a beauty like the garden of the Lord. Surely heaven itself could have no fairer sight for our blessed Master than such a disciple here in the midst of our busy life, one whose noiseless influence is like a breath of heaven, bringing wholesomeness, sweetness, and strength. To come into contact with such an one is to find a healing virtue.

Think, then, how Christ is saddened and what a sense of failure hurts Him when any stands forth as His disciple, and yet brings no blessing, never

healing the springs of bitterness nor turning the barren places into beauty. The salt that is without savour is no salt at all, fling it away ; white it may be, and in the most orthodox of salt-cellar, but if it is not sweetening the life about you, fling it away and cry to God for some better.

But what of the Master's grief when he who is called by His name is himself a source of bitterness and blasting ? A Christian—and yet blighting and withering like an east wind ! Called by Christ's holy name, yet always grumbling, jealous, envious, muttering ill-will ! A minister, indeed, but of what ? Not of grace ; not of brotherly kindness ; not of wholesome truth ; ministering only to the burden of the world's unkindness and misery ! Let not such an one think within himself that he shall in anywise be reckoned as the salt of the earth. Salt that hath lost its savour is good for nothing ; but even bad salt never becomes a source of corruption.

It is Christ's appeal to us, and His entreaty,
Be ye therefore perfect !

Ye are the salt of *the business life*. A power in the midst of it, to check its corruption.

Do not smile at such an assertion as absurd. It can be done. "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth," saith He who is our strength, and He fits us for our position. Surrender yourself to Him for this purpose, to check all that is underhand ; all that is actually ungenerous.

"Well, but you can't do business on those principles."

Very well, then, if that is really so, settle which you will give up, Christ or the business. Don't call yourself a Christian and be false to your King. Will you give yourself right up to Him for this? Never was there greater need of a valiant, enthusiastic devotion to Christ than in the business life of to-day. It may not pay. Very likely it will not. Leave that matter to the Lord Jesus, and make your one thought an out-and-out loyalty to Him.

The world has some honesty about it after all. If a man will be steadfastly consistent in the

service of his heavenly Master, the world may laugh at his scruples, but it won't despise him in its heart of hearts. It will honour him ; it will believe in him ; and he will act upon it as the salt. But the world keeps its scorn for those religious people whose religion only makes them clever. They don't fall down into the black pit of cheating and lying, not because they hate a lie as damnable, but because they have learnt to trim and shape their words so cleverly that they make the truth itself tell lies for them. Ah, if they looked up, surely they should see that Face filled with a grief which is changing into indignation ! What, these the salt of the earth, the light of the world !

Salt, so needful, so wholesome, yet is it to be wisely used. There is a kind of good people who find it saves so much trouble to deal out religion in large doses, especially, perhaps, to servants and children ; giving them a long and solemn lecture on religion at some solemn time, or when one is in the mood for it, or, still more

likely, when some grave offence is committed, as if religion were only a supplementary punishment. No wonder such sufferers never like the taste of it again. Salt discreetly sprinkled over all the common dishes of life, giving all things a savour and sweetness—this our Master seeks to make us.

Look up again to the gracious Lord ; this is His desire and purpose concerning us. *Ye are the salt of the earth. . . . Be ye therefore perfect.*

Ye are the light of the world. So the Saviour takes us again to share His great work, and to further it. “*I am the light of the world,*” He saith of Himself. Then He lifts us up to His high level, and saith of us, “*Ye are the light of the world.*”

Here again there meets us at once the thought of our self-surrender to Christ. The “light” is a candle, a lamp—not a star, much less a glow-worm. It is a *burning*, and therefore a shining light. The candle consumes itself in blessing others. So are we to be like unto Christ, who gave *Himself* for us.

We cannot get this truth too firmly fixed

within us, that on our part this self-surrender is everything.

We cheat ourselves with vague aspirations and desires to be useful—moonshine, cold and transient. We set ourselves to rush to and fro trying to do a hundred good works—a zeal that may never see the Master's face; never hear the Master's voice; never know the Master's will. Holiness is coming *unto Him*, and giving ourselves right up to our dear and blessed Saviour, that He may fulfil in us His purpose—the purpose of glorifying the Father.

Glorifying the Father! Why do not the words stir us and inflame us? To serve HIM were much; but we are called to more than that. To please HIM were blessed; but ours is to be a higher life than that. So living as that men shall GLORIFY Him. What possibility can be beyond that? It is the heaven of the highest angels; it is the rapture of the seraphs; it is the great life-work of the Son of God; and yet it is Christ's command concerning you and me!

A lofty work, indeed—the highest and grandest conceivable. Say then, is it not the saddest proof of our blind, deaf, dead souls—that we can think of it so coldly, so unmoved! It is the fullest proof of His great salvation, that *we* should be called to such a high estate, and made capable of so sublime a service. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

And yet, though it is so high and noble a work, this holiness is to reach down to all the lowliest round of life. It giveth light *to all that are in the house*. I knocked my head once in going up the dark staircase of a lighthouse tower. “You want more light *inside*,” I said to the keeper.

“Oh, it doesn’t matter about us, sir, so long as the light shines well out at sea.”

Holiness shines within as well as without. It brightens every room in the house—the kitchen, the nursery, the dining-room, upstairs as well as down. It cannot be hid.

And yet it is always hidden. So shine that

men may . . . *glorify your Father in heaven.* Self-seeking is slain, self-consciousness even is overcome. O happy deliverance! who does not long for it? Well, here it is for us, like all other gifts, *in Him*—coming unto Him, and, in His strength and for His sake, giving ourselves right up to Him, for His great purpose.

THE HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS.

Where is it? Ah, what weary searches some have had for it! What journeyings men have gone in the hope of finding it—the holy grail, the vision of God, at once the source and crown of holiness! And some have found it, after years of toil and peril—found it in a whirlwind of rapture, up at heaven's gate, far away and out of sight of earth, up in visions of bewildering glory; and simple men have sighed and trudged along life's muddy roads, and faced the dreary winds and rains, and wished that they could fly—then they might be holy too.

Cheer up, sad heart, cheer up. The Highway

of Holiness is along the commonest road of life—along your very way. In wind and rain, no matter how it beats—*only, it is going hand in hand with Him.*

Look again at this fifth chapter of St. Matthew, ver. 17. Christ is come to fulfil *in us* the law and the prophets ; to show to us their innermost meaning, and to bring out in us their fullest life.

Read vers. 21-24. He is come to go down with us into the midst of those who vex and wrong us—the slow and blundering people, the quick and careless ones, the hot-tempered, who set us on fire ; the clumsy, who provoke us to impatience. Holiness is in just taking His hand for strength to check our temper, and to hold our tongue. And if we have spoken harshly, that gentle Hand leads us back again, and gives us courage to say that we are sorry for it, and so to be reconciled to our brother. That is the Highway of Holiness.

Read vers. 27-33. It lies along a way where

evil suggestions meet us and whisper foul things at our ear, but He goes with us and we hold Him. "The Lord my strength . . . my goodness, and my fortress" (Ps. cxliv. 2). Oh, blessed victory is ours then! Hand-in-hand with Him, all that He has is ours. We walk in the light as He is in the light; we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. The crucified Christ is ours most fully when we walk and talk with the risen, the living, the present Christ,—more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

It may not be clear to us what is meant by "the destruction of the evil principle" within us—"the rooting up of the remains of the carnal mind," but what of that? Do not let us stay arguing about terms and phrases, or thinking this or that kind of experience is essential. Do not bewilder yourself about yourself; and do not stay bewailing the hindrances around you. Our part is to set eye and heart on Him. I do know that hand-in-hand with Him I can overcome sin. I

do know that without Him I am the helpless slave of sin. What more need any know ?

Read vers. 33-37. The highway of holiness leads down into the market-place, amidst the many words of those that buy and sell—the beating up and beating down. It goes still hand-in-hand with Him, and so finds strength and grace to be quiet—O rarest gift and truest grace ! In Him we find the even truth, whose yea is altogether yea, and a nay that is altogether nay. Hand-in-hand with Him is this grace learnt, to speak a word that needs no oath, that does not overstate nor understate, nor “ say *perhaps* silently ;” a word that hits the mark at once and needs no second. That is the Highway of Holiness.

Read vers. 38-48. The Highway of Holiness goes down into the midst of enemies who injure and defraud. But still hand-in-hand with Him, He teaches and strengthens us neither to resent nor to avenge such injuries ; but in all things to be governed by a noble charity,—a charity which has its penalties and prisons it is true, but uses them

neither in malice nor anger, for charity is sister to justice.

This is Holiness—yielding ourselves to the Saviour for the fulfilment in us of His high purposes ; *receiving Him*, and thus having authority to become the sons of God, and true brothers to all men.



We are the Salt of the Earth

AN ILLUSTRATION

“THE world’s only estimate of religion is Holiness. The world wants men who are saved from secret faults. A little crack will spoil the ring of the coin. The world expects that a Christian man shall be free from little tricks of gain and all crooked ways of business, even though they of the world pretend to make light of them. They expect, and rightly, that the Christian should be more gentle and patient and generous than he who does not profess to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus. For the sake of those who take their notion of religion from our lives we need put up this prayer earnestly, ‘Cleanse thou me from secret faults.’”

Homely Talk, p. 100.



CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

We are the Salt of the Earth.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

“And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.”—
LUKE v. 3.



OUT of the Ship. The Lord Jesus had been preaching in the synagogues ; but there were very many outside who wanted to hear Him, and whom He wanted to reach. So He entered into a boat belonging to one of His disciples that was drawn up on the beach, and when it was thrust a little way from the shore He sat down and taught the people.

Here is the want of our time as of all time.

Jesus seeks a pulpit right in the midst of the daily life.—The preaching place is away from contact with the business. The architecture, the services, all the associations, are very sharply marked off from the factory and the office, from the workshop and the home. And it is right that we should secure such solemnity and reverence in our worship, and such freedom from interruption ;—the Master bids us shut the door when we pray. But there is a tendency in all this to make religion one thing and business another, each having its own time and its own place, and each having very little to do with the other. The shop comes to be a long way from the sanctuary, and the kitchen from the church. It ought not to be so. Our business as Christians is to serve the Lord in every business of life. We are to find the desk and counter as near to God as any place of worship can be ; to prove His presence as much in our homes as in His house. Then, again, Christ *wants a pulpit in the midst of the people.* To have the pulpit in the church only is to leave ten

thousand out of reach, never hearing His voice, never seeing His face, not knowing that Christ has come. He would teach the *multitudes*. See Him as he sits on the deck of the fishing craft. One gentle hand rests on the ropes of the rigging ; the brown sail hangs behind Him ; at His feet lie oars and nets ; close about Him is the little group of swarthy sailors. And on the beach the crowd is gathered—anybody may stand and hear Him there—publicans and sinners, Roman soldiers and Samaritans, all are equally welcome. Here was Jesus *right in their midst*. And here was Jesus having to do with everything about them. The boat was His pulpit. He leaned against the mast. He sat on the deck. His shadow fell on all the fishing gear and on the very water that lapped the boat ; so He hallowed all these common things. So then the pulpit for which Christ asks is *our business, our daily work*. Thereon He would take His stand, and thence He would preach to those who would never see or hear Him in the church.

Do you envy this fisherman who lent his boat to Jesus? He offers us the same honour. He begs us to do Him the same favour. He comes to each of us and asks us to let Him have *our daily occupation* as His preaching place;—the office and workshop, the counter, the desk, the mother's work in the home, the servant's work in the house—this is the pulpit He seeks. *Will you let Him have it?*

Look at the boat which the Lord Jesus uses. It was the boat of a disciple. He never thrusts Himself upon any. Where He is welcome, there He comes gladly. He stands and knocks at every heart, entreating; but He enters only where they open the door for Him. Let us ask ourselves—can we afford to receive the Lord on board our ship? Is it all so right and in order that we are glad to see Him coming in? Can we trust Him with all the keys of the house? Can we hand over the books to Him that He may look through all the accounts—cash-book and ledger, the income and the outgoing? Can we let that Eye see it

all, and that sacred Finger run up the columns—what others pay us and what we pay others? what we get, and what we give, and what we keep?

It was the boat of an ardent and loving disciple. Peter cared for one thing more than he cared for the business. Whilst he held the fishing-line, his thoughts were with the mighty Prophet of Nazareth. As he opened the nets, he was recalling the words of that wonderful Teacher, and longing that he could see and hear Him again. How eagerly Simon received Him into the boat! Earth could afford no such joy; no gain could compare with this privilege—that the Master should sit in his boat and teach the people. That is the occupation from which Jesus will be seen and heard, where such a loving heart longs for His coming, where the deepest and most constant thought of the soul is not to make money; but this desire runs through everything—*To make men think well of Jesus.* There will He come and sit and teach, and many shall see Him and hear Him.

It was the boat of a busy disciple. A hard-working man was Peter. Whenever you get a glimpse of him, you always find him very busy. He had been toiling all night ; and now we could not blame him if he had been lying down for a nap. But he is at it still, busily washing his nets. No easy-going man was this, basking in the sunshine, and talking very sweetly about trusting in the Lord. He is a disciple ; but he is not away neglecting his business. He is ready to give it up at a moment's notice when the Lord bids him do so ; but till then he will stick at it and work hard. There is one thing about Peter that is very admirable as a business man,—he had a great horror of debt. He could not bear to make the tax-gatherer call a second time. That is the sort of disciple from whose business the Lord preaches. He will not step on board the boat of any lazy follower who thinks it is heavenly-minded to do as little as possible, and who contentedly runs into debt, saying, "The Lord will provide." Hard-working disciples who can toil all night, if need

be—theirs is the business from which Christ will preach.

Then another thing we read is especially important—*They were washing their nets*. These fishermen would have the outermost thing belonging to them *clean*. They must have clean hands that serve aboard the vessel of the Lord, and everything about the craft must be honest and pure. The Lord will never help us to catch fish with dirty nets. He will not come aboard a boat, no matter how fair she may look, where, from stem to stern, everything is not clean. *Integrity* is the name of the craft in which you will find the Lord, and *Honesty* is carved at her figure-head.

Then *He prayed them to thrust the ship a little from the shore*. He might have bidden them as His disciples ; He might have commanded as their Lord ; but thus graciously He prays them. And eagerly they do His will—Peter standing at the bow, anchor in hand, ready to drop it at the first sign from the Master. That is the business from which the Lord Jesus will be seen and heard,

where men are willing to come out beyond the line of others, and to be singular for Christ. It is not enough to have Christ on board, not enough to have Him sitting and teaching. The boat must be where the people can best see Him and hear Him. Ah, how the blessed Lord delights in such a company as this, where trouble is a joy, and anything a gain, if thereby He can be better served ! Wherever such love greets Him and such service waits on Him, there assuredly shall the people see and hear Him.

Then as to the *Sermon* which the Lord would preach from the daily occupation. It is a sermon which cannot be preached half so well anywhere else. *Considerateness for other people.* These men would have to be off again at sunset to fish, and they had toiled all the previous night. But that others might see and hear Jesus, they leave their nets, they thrust out the ship, and they wait upon the Lord. A sermon that was never so much needed as it is to-day. In the rush and fierce competition of the times let every disciple of the

Lord Jesus think of every man with true brotherliness. I am bound to consider others and their living as much as I am to consider myself. If I make myself rich by riding over other people, then am I likely to handle blood-money, and no amount of "doing good" can undo the mischief of what is ill-gotten. Of course this truth, like all others, is open to abuse. There are lazy ne'er-do-well fellows who would make the whole world stand still to suit their convenience. And of course it is open to argument and discussion. Well, if we are honestly trying to bring ourselves to do our duty, argue as much as we will and it shall not hurt us. But if we are trying to get rid of our duty to our brother, no amount of argument shall afford us any excuse. You may say that it is impossible to do business on any such principles. *Then give up business*, if that is the issue. But is it? Is not His holy religion fitted for men and women in the work-a-day world? Does not Christ come on board the boat that we may find Him in the commonest callings and the honest

rounds of work? And does not everything in His holy religion bind us to this gracious considerateness of others? If you are getting your share of the daily bread, do not double your share by taking away somebody else's crust. If the Lord is dealing bountifully with you, can you deal hardly and niggardly towards those who are dependent upon you? As a disciple of the Lord Jesus let this come first, *that He be seen and heard.*

Another sermon that the Blessed Lord would preach from our daily occupation is on faithfulness—*Provide things honest* is a quotation that many people forget to finish. They leave out the half of it. Provide things honest *in the sight of all men.* Beware of things that are honest only in the sight of those with whom it pays. It is wonderful what men come to see if they apply enough golden eye-salve to the eyes. Beware of things that are honest in the sight only of very shrewd and clever people, who are very anxious to assure you that it is "quite the custom of the trade." Let the Master sit by and check the

accounts, and try the weights, and hear the words. Let His pure eyes look through the business. The crying want of our times is this, that men should see and hear Jesus in the boat of every disciple. *Faithfulness* on the part of His disciples goes farthest to give the world faith in their Lord and Master. Faithfulness when we lose by it as well as when it pays. Faithfulness in little things as well as great. Faithfulness behind the back as well as before the face. Through and through us, in thought and deed, in word and look, for His sake *faithfulness*.

Then there are two or three other thoughts that grow out of the incident. *It fares well with the boat when Christ is on board.* "And when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."

Notice that the Lord said *nets*.

Simon answered and said—said with a kind of half-pitiful smile, that meant to say the Great Teacher was wonderful at teaching the people, but

of course He knew nothing about fishing. How could He, living all His days up amongst the hills? "It is no good, Sir," said Simon; "we have toiled all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the *net*." And he took up the first that came to hand.

Ah Simon, the Blessed Master knows more about fishing than you think! And, my brother, he knows as much about your business as about Simon's.

"And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their *net* brake." (They needed the *nets*, after all.) Christ never made a rich man whilst He was on earth, and never promised to do that. But He made everybody blest who was willing to receive a blessing at His hand. His presence in the business maketh rich indeed; and He addeth no sorrow with it.

"And they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats." Prosperity that comes when Jesus is in the business

is a *safe* prosperity. Prosperity without Him has ruined very many. If it be true that Love flies out at the window when Adversity knocks at the door, it is quite as true that Pride and Envy and Self-indulgence often slip in when Prosperity lifts the latch. But when Jesus orders the prosperity, it shall bless others as well as ourselves.

“*When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*” Think of the fishing net giving the disciples the most amazing manifestation of Jesus that they had seen. Ah, so it is when Jesus is in the business : the common daily work of life shall bring glorious revelations of the Lord’s Presence and Power. How often has the little shop, the office, the lowly kitchen, been lit up with the proofs of His wisdom and goodness !

“And Jesus said unto Simon, *Fear not ; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*” The fisherman who takes Christ on board is promoted to the work of an Apostle. To serve Jesus in the common round of daily life is the way up to the

highest and most splendid service for the King. Depend upon it that he who serves Jesus well in the daily occupation shall come to be a soul-winner. Faith cometh by hearing—but seeing is a great help to believing, too. And the sight anywhere of a real, hard-working disciple of the Lord's goes a long way to make men believe.

“And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.” When Jesus sits in the ship, everything is in its right place. The cargo is in the hold, *not in the heart*. Cares and gains, fears and losses, yesterday's failure and to-day's success, do not thrust themselves in between us and His Presence. The heart cleaves to *Him*. “Goodness and mercy shall *follow* me,” sang the psalmist. Alas when the goodness and mercy come before us, and our blessings shut Jesus from view! Here is the blessed order—the Lord ever first, I following Him, His goodness and mercy following me.

To-day solemnly let us give up our daily occupation to the Lord for His service—to be His

preaching-place, where men may see and hear Him. *This is what the world wants.* Doubts are born not so much of bad books as of un-Christlike Christians. Prejudices against religion find much of their strength in the keen and hard business ways of religious people ; or else in their easy-going indifference about the little things of daily life. No amount of "Heavenly-mindedness" can make up for the lack of exactness in our words, or of straightforwardness in our dealings. The world does not believe in the flaming love for men's souls that never concerns itself about their bodies or their daily bread. It matters very little how eager a man may be to save his neighbours' souls on Sundays, if he is swift to take them by the throat at the first chance on Monday morning.

And this is what our Lord and Master asks : that He may uplift the common work of life into His service ; to transform it from a round of drudgery into the work of angels ; to make the office, the workshop, the home, His Holy Temple,

wherein we serve Him day and night. And thus are His disciples to be the salt of the earth.

This, too, is Holiness—yielding, not ourselves only, but also the daily occupation to Christ ; and receiving Him into the midst of it all, that He may use it for His own service and glory.



The Inner Life of Holiness

Do not think of Holiness as "a blessing"—occasional, uncertain, which may be spent or lost: IT IS A LIFE. And even as earth is fitted to yield the sustenance of all that lives thereon, so all the provision needful to this "higher Life" is waiting for us and within our reach. Seek and ye shall find. The Life of Holiness falls in with the deepest, largest, fullest purposes of God—He Himself is its source and supply.



CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

're Inner Life of Holiness.

“Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them : else ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven,” etc. ST. MATTHEW vi.—Read to the end.



WE come in this chapter to the Inner Life of Holiness. Here again the starting-point is in these words—YOUR FATHER. It is only as we know Him, and the deep reality of our relationship to Him, that this chapter will be opened up to us. Let us come again to our gracious Master, Who waits to declare Him unto us—sitting at His feet let us ask Him to teach us—*Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

Running through this chapter are two lines of

thought that become one in the deep underlying truth.

1. The Father's Claim.

2. The Soul's Supply.

The two rise up sharply side by side in the Lord's Prayer—"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven"—thus far the Father's claim. Then comes the child's supply. "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Then we reach the point at which the two unite: "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

These two make up the inner life of holiness. We will take them in order, asking the blessed Spirit to lead us by His light.

I. THE FATHER'S CLAIM.

Born of God, we are bound to Him, as we have

seen, in the deepest, closest, most abiding relationship. This great love of our Father has its claim upon us. He appeals to us, the authority of the commandment hidden in the tenderness of the love: "My son, My purpose concerning you is that you should be holy, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Yield yourself to Me for the fulfilment of My purpose. Give yourself over to Me in your innermost aim, and desire that in Me you may find the whole end of your being." His love claims that we seek to please Him in everything, with no side-glances at others; in all the round of our "righteousness," in our giving, and praying, and fasting, having a single eye to the glory and pleasure of our Father in heaven (vers. 1-6; 16-19).

His love would have us come close to Him, not as suppliants who knock at the outer door, not as strangers who tarry in the hall and stately courts of the king, but as His children who come right into the inner chamber of the Father's presence (ver. 6).

His love claims from us that we shall not come to Him with vain repetitions, as if we doubted His love or thought we had to wring our blessings from an unwilling hand. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him" (vers. 7, 8).

He claims from us that we honour Him as our Father, and set in the forefront of everything the glory of His name, the coming of His kingdom, the doing of His will (vers. 9, 10).

His love demands that we who are called and entitled to such a lofty rank and high nobility are not to have our hearts snared and tangled here as if this were our abiding home (vers. 19, 20).

His love demands from us further that we are not to be anxious, worried, fretting. If we are His children, and if He is our Father, we are bound to trust Him, quite sure that all these things will be added unto us. "Therefore, I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . . Your Heavenly Father

knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (vers. 24-34).

He claims from us that in all the round of the daily life and in the midst of these commonest things—eating, drinking, being clothed, we are ever to seek first His kingdom ; most eager for its treasure, most ambitious of its honours, and ever most jealous of the dignity and greatness of our King (ver. 33).

This is the inner life of holiness—the whole-hearted surrender of ourselves to the claims of our Heavenly Father. He is my Father ; I am His child. In all things I am to obey Him, to trust Him, to make Him glad with my love.

Let us dwell upon these claims until we come to see them in their depth and breadth, claiming every power we have and reaching to everything we do. Let us seek to feel them in the full force of their authority, and yet in all let them come to us as the tender appeal of His great love.

By these claims let us test ourselves and all the conditions of our life. We are the sons of God,

and we have no business anywhere or in anything that conflicts with the will of our Heavenly Father. The student lays out his life plans for study : his place of residence ; his day's arrangements ; the people he mixes with ; the books he reads ; the money getting and the money spending—all are controlled and directed by this. All this may involve him in many inconveniences ; but he makes light of them and allows himself no choice in the matter. The merchant plans his life in relation to his business : his home, his hours, his work, his very pleasures—all are made subject to the claims of the business. There are many worries and annoyances, but he takes them as a matter of course, and does not think of giving up the prosperous business on that account.

Now we are, first of all, *sons of God*. That is our calling and profession. We are in the world first of all *to be like God*. And because we are sons of God, we are to find in this relationship a power strong enough to order all our life's plans for the service and pleasure of our Father. Surely

it is not too much to demand that such a relationship, with all its glorious possibilities, should be able to inspire us with a purpose as steady and resolute as that which the student finds in learning or the merchant in money-making.

Our Lord teaches us further that these claims of our Heavenly Father can only be met by a right waiting upon God. "*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.*"

The life of holiness finds its strength and beauty in the vision of God. To know God is life eternal. By faith in Christ and by the grace of the Holy Ghost we have received that spiritual life which sees God, and hears His voice, and loves Him, and speaks to Him with trustful boldness as our Father. To know more of God is to grow in holiness. *And hidden heart-communion with God is the royal road to this knowledge.* It is only when we have entered into the secret place of the Most High, and dwell under the shadow of the Almighty, that we learn to say aright the simplest

petitions of the Lord's Prayer. It is when we see the Father in His infinite holiness, that we learn to bow before Him in true reverence, and to say, *Hallowed be thy name.* It is when we see Him in His supreme majesty as King of kings and Lord of lords that we pray, *Thy kingdom come.* It is when we prove the deep, full blessedness that there is in Him, the infinite love, the perfect wisdom, the tender pity, that we long for the whole world to love and trust and rest in Him: "*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*"

And to set God aright before us is to set ourselves right before God. To see His holiness is to renew within ourselves the springs of a gracious penitence; to have kindled within us an utter abhorrence of that which is evil, and a passionate longing for likeness to Him. To see His majesty is to lose ourselves in lowliness and meekness at His feet; and yet to be lifted up into the dignity of the sons of God, assured and triumphant in His greatness. To see His love is to be amazed and hurt that we could ever doubt or fear or murmur.

It is to surrender ourselves a living sacrifice to Him ; to find ourselves filled and fired with such a steadfast love that we hold all things for His service, and do all things for His pleasure.

God calls us up into the clefts of the rock away on the mountain top that He may make all His goodness pass before us, and we are transformed by beholding. Great swelling thoughts of ourselves come only from low and unworthy thoughts of God. Light estimate of duty cannot go hand in hand with the right estimate of God's authority. Self-seeking is cured by the clear sight of His claims. Harshness and covetousness and all uncharities are stricken for want of very breath in that Divine atmosphere of His presence.

Then out of this dependence of ours as children, and the revelation of His power and wisdom and love as our Father, comes the further prayer for bread, and for forgiveness, and for the guidance of His gracious hand. Here is at once the foundation, strength, and the crowning beauty of holiness —REVERENT LOVE and CHILDLIKE TRUST. And

they live and move and have their being only in the true vision of God. The observance of this precept is the very root and spring of holiness. *“Enter into thine inner chamber, and pray to thy Father which is in secret.”*

And finding God thus we take Him with us. We come down from the mount, but not alone. The eye is anointed, and we see Him ; and the ear hath He opened. We come forth from the secret place, but we abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Difficulties suggest His present help. Temptation tightens our hold upon His hand. In every mercy we see His love and thank Him ; in the worries and cares that meet us we learn to find the opportunities for victory ; in fear we shrink at His side ; and communion with Him is as easy and as natural as it is blessed. There is begotten within us a spiritual sensitiveness which is quick to understand the Father's will, and delights to do it.

Does there rise before you a dreadful contrast? Selfishness and unfaithfulness having dominion

over us ; the scene of a wayward, foolish, stubborn child who lets go the Hand and stumbles on alone? Look up. *It is to fulfil in us these very claims of our Father that Christ is come.* For this, for nothing less than this, we believe in Him. "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Let us daily receive Jesus into our hearts for this power, and then daily surrender ourselves to the Father for the service and life of the sons of God.

II. THE SOUL'S SUPPLY.

Thus our Lord bids us beware of what we may call a *natural* religious life ;—a religious life that is born of self, and sustained of self, that has no higher source and no other aim. It prays and gives alms and fasts—but all that is only the price it pays for the good opinion of others. It gives its gold to buy men's admiration, and has it : that is its reward.

Very different, in all its course, is the life of

holiness. It never does, it never can by any possibility, reach that point at which it stands up before men to be seen of them, and says, "I am perfect." It would be false to its whole nature if it could thus make a vulgar show of itself and trumpet its piety in brazen ado before the world. The Father in heaven does not recognise that as having any claim upon Him. Holiness has altogether another source and another nature. It is not born from within ; it cannot thrive on itself ; it does not seek itself. It is born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man. IT IS BORN OF GOD. *Your Father*—the life of holiness has its beginning in that relationship, and in the Father it must find not only its source but its continued sustenance and growth.

Like the life of the body, the spiritual life is dependent upon that from which it is derived. The body, taken from the earth, is dependent upon the earth. It must breathe the breath of earth. It must feed on that which the earth yields. It must be warmed with the warmth, and

lit with the light, which belongs to earth ; it must be exercised in its work, helped by its society, and it must be renewed in sleep. So our spiritual life is from God, and in Him only can we find its supply. Let us set this plainly before us. We cannot sustain the life of holiness by any outside forms—prayers, almsgivings, fastings. We cannot sustain it by thoughts of God. Orthodoxy is not holiness. The springs of this new life are much further in than that—at once deeper down and higher up. The source of our holiness is in God, and in Him it is always to be beginning. It is not a life begun in the soul, and henceforth independent and self-existent. In Him, and in Him only, we live and move and have our being. We can only receive this life from Him ; and we can only retain it by continually receiving—of Him, for Him, to Him, is its ceaseless round ; like the rain that cometh down from heaven, decking the earth with fairness and enriching it with food, then mounting to heaven again. For our supply, as for the Father's claims, this is the one great con-

dition—“*Enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.*”

To all life as we know it, derived and dependent, there are the same wants, in plant and in animal, in body and soul:—

AIR,	FOOD,
WARMTH,	LIGHT,
EXERCISE,	SOCIETY,
SLEEP.	

There may be a kind of existence without some one or two of these, but “the abundant life” is only for him who will secure each. And these are the conditions of that healthy spiritual life which is holiness.

The breath of our new life is to be found only in communion with the Father, away in the inner chamber, behind the veil, in the Holy of Holies of His immediate presence.

And this is more than a first condition of living. If we do not get breath, it matters very little what else we get. Food, warmth, sleep, are

of no avail if we cannot breathe. This entering into the presence of God and communing with Him is the renewal of our spiritual atmosphere.

Set before your mind the case of the diver who has to go down to work in the depths under the sea. The water is the breath of the fish, but it is death to him. The condition of his life is that the air of this upper world be pumped down to him. Then he goes down without fear, careful beforehand to see that all is right with the atmosphere above him, and careful, however deep he goes, or however busy he is, to keep the communication open with that upper world to which he belongs. He is not always thinking about his breathing, but he cannot do without it for a moment, and he knows better than to suffer any trifling with the apparatus which secures that.

So are we in this world ; the atmosphere is too dense for our new life. And yet our duty lies down here. Well, fear not, go down ; only, first of all, be sure about the communication with that higher life to which we belong. If that be broken

off or neglected, we die. *Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me!* is a cry for very life. And this hiding of ourselves with God in prayer is the adjusting of the apparatus with that source whence comes the breath of life to us.

Nothing can take the place of this quiet waiting upon God. It were a mad folly to try to live without sleep or food; but what of the man who tries to live without breath? That he does who suffers prayer to dry up into a mere set of phrases, which are gone over without any thought or heart. Wandering thoughts in prayer-time! Is it any wonder? They have nothing else to do.

Prayer is more than a kneeling and asking something from God—much more. It is more than expecting and claiming that which we ask. What we need is to get into the presence of God. We want the hallowing touch of God's own hand, and the light of His countenance. Tarrying in His presence we must have the breath of God breathed into us again, renewing the life which He created at the first.

This is the first, the *great* need of the life of holiness, without which nothing else can avail us anything.

FOOD.

The second condition of the healthy spiritual life is food. The spirit can no more live without being fed than can the body. But what can it feed on? All about us is of the earth, earthy. Where are the green pastures in which the Good Shepherd can make His sheep lie down, satisfied with the abundance? There is but one answer—*in the Word*. The Word of God is the food of the life of God. The Word of God read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested, is essential to healthy spiritual life. The blessed man finds his strength in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night.

Think how the milk is fitted to the child, or meat to the strong man ; how each nourishes the whole system, turning into blood, bone, nerve, muscle ; how each strengthens every organism—

brain, heart, lung, eye, ear, hand. So the word of God is fitted to the life of God within us, ministering to every spiritual faculty ; invigorating all the graces of our new life—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; so strengthening us that to do the will of God is a delight instead of a burden, as a strong man *rejoiceth* to run a race.

And picture a babe without milk—a puling, pining, wasting thing. So is the soul without the Word, a life that is a prolonged dying without growth, without beauty, without strength ! The churches swarm with these sickly babes of twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years of age, always requiring to be dandled and petted, and always needing to be looked after, crying for cordials and to be carried,—of no use to any living creature, only a burden to everybody. *They have never fed on the Word.*

This feeding means much more than *reading*. SEARCH, MEDITATE,—these are the words which direct us in its use. We need to get in at the

life of the Word, and we need to get the Word into the life.

It might shame us out of our indolence in this matter if we would quietly think out the process of our being fed—the story of the bread that perisheth.

Think of some benighted citizen, ignorant of whence his daily bread comes (there are many such). And the kindly countryman takes him forth to enlighten him, brings him away in the dull ploughing-time when, under wintry skies, they turn the furrows.

“But where is the bread?” cries the bewildered citizen, looking at the dull brown earth.

“Wait and you will see,” says the patient countryman.

And now there comes forth the sower casting out the handful of seed.

“But is not the bread ready yet?” murmurs the eager visitor.

“Wait, sir, wait. Come again in the spring.”

“Why, surely it will be all eaten before that,” thinks the citizen.

So the winter has slowly dragged itself away, and the spring time arrives. Here is the dainty young green wheat waving glossy in the April sunshine.

“Where is it?” asks he of the city.

“Wait, and come again, sir, in the early autumn.”

And now it is the harvest time, and he sees them reap the yellow corn and bear it home.

“But I don’t see the bread!”

Then follow all the further processes—threshing, with its complications—the grinding, and all the pleasant mysteries of the mill ; and at last the crowning skill of baking.

“Here, sir, is your loaf.”

“All that to get me a crust of bread!” thinks the enlightened citizen, amazed.

But even here the matter does not end. A score of further marvels are involved in the process of eating and digesting it ; the teeth, sharp to divide, and flattened to grind it, with their movements fitted exactly to their work—the supply of

gastric and other juices. So many vast and varied contrivances to feed us with the bread that perisheth. And do we think the soul can be fed by five minutes' careless glancing at a chapter?

The Word is called *good seed*. God provides that. But we find neither much interest nor profit in the Word because we don't take the trouble to plough and sow and reap and thresh and grind and bake for ourselves. We beg our crusts from door to door—old, dry, mouldy, like those which the Gibeonites showed to Joshua. No wonder we find so little relish for the Word.

And not for strengthening only is the Word necessary to the life of holiness. It is a power directly *cleansing us*. "Sanctify them through Thy truth" is still the Saviour's prayer for His disciples. "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you," is a blessedness that we may prove. Christ has given Himself for us that He may sanctify and cleanse us "*with the washing of water by the Word*." Nothing can so hallow the imagination as to have it hung about

with these scenes—"the chambers of our imagery" thus adorned and consecrated. The motives and aims must be purged by its precepts. Our hopes and energies are to be purified as well as stimulated by its promises, and the heart freed from its earth-stains and spots of worldliness by these glowing revelations.

We need only allude very briefly to the other conditions ; not because they are in any degree of less importance, but because to secure these of which we have already spoken, is to secure much of the others. That communion with God in which we find our spiritual atmosphere is the source of light. The food yields the warmth. Each reveals the presence of our gracious Lord ; each invigorates us for exercise ; each invites us to rest.

Yet it is well for us to think of each of these distinctly as necessary to the spiritual health, and definitely to seek them.

We need WARMTH ; we cannot afford to live without finding in our religion that which stimulates and develops the emotions. *All that is*

within us is to bless the Lord, and we cannot afford to have the heart chilled, the feelings paralysed. The New Testament shows that Christianity began with a great outburst of gladness, so deep, so pure, so sustained, that earth had never seen anything like it. Heaven touched earth, and admitted the disciple through Christ—Who is the Door—into the fellowship of its own blessedness. What a picture of pure joy is set before us in this description of the early Church! “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.” What a triumphant rapture rings through the experience of St. Paul; and how constant are the exhortations to rejoice! We are not to wait for tides and feelings of gladness; we are to seek and to secure this abiding joy for ourselves. We need linger underneath the Cross, musing on the Crucified, until the fire of our love is kindled and wraps our soul with ardent adoration. We need

sometimes rise up and sit in the Heavenly Places with Christ Jesus, and taste the bliss of those who see the King in His beauty. The joy of the Lord is to be our strength.

LIGHT.

The life of holiness is a growing perception and a larger revelation of God's will. There is in it a steadily increasing power to receive and to perceive. The eye grows stronger with use, until it learns to look upon the Sun.

Holiness is very much a matter of dwelling in the light. She cannot live at the poles, where life is dwarfed and stunted and frozen ; her home is on the very equator. The sunshine of the tropics turns the very grasses and ferns of colder climates into trees, and makes the shivering plants of the arctic regions into the monarchs of the forest. The lives that enrich the world with ripened fruit ; the mighty love that can endure ; the graces that adorn and beautify the Christian character,—can only be grown *in the light*.

Holiness follows the sun that she may dwell in a perpetual noon. They who live in the dawn only are but touched on one side with the solar rays, and on the chill side cast a black, far-reaching shadow. But they who know "the perfect day" have found a noontide blessedness, wherein the light falls round about on every side, and the shadows, the black and gloomy thoughts that never felt the sun, are lost.

EXERCISE.

But holiness cannot rest in seeing, or spend herself in emotion. She must show forth her love in her life. A hearer of the Word only that she may be a doer of it. The heavenly vision creates only a more complete consecration and a more earnest inquiry, "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?*"

SOCIETY.

For holiness cannot dwell alone. These three, Light, Exercise, and Society, are beautifully set

before us by the Apostle John : " If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." *Walk, light, fellowship.* God's own white light shines right down into the innermost thoughts and wishes, in upon the secret aims and emotions. Quick to see the stains and specks of evil, we are as quick to claim the precious blood which cleanseth from all sin. And walking thus there meet us the Shining Ones.

REST.

This last condition of the healthy spiritual life is often overlooked. Yet it is as needful to the spiritual life, at any rate in its present condition, as it is to mind or body. It is to be feared that there are not a few who think and call themselves Christians that do nothing else but sleep. Religion with them is a waking up occasionally on Sundays to sigh, and stretch, and look toward heaven mournfully---and then a going to sleep again.

But there are many earnest souls who suffer much because they have not learned to sleep.

There are no promises more frequent than those which are to secure for us this rest. And that not as a recovery from weariness, but that we may find at the outset strength for service. The Blessed Master would have us at our ease with Him as the first condition. "*The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want. He maketh me TO LIE DOWN,*" and then after that, "HE LEADETH ME." "*Come unto Me,*" saith He most tenderly, "AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST ;" then, "*learn of Me.*"

It is away in the inner chamber, in the presence of God, that we find this rest, in the vision of God. To see Him in His Omnipotence controlling all things, to know that His infinite wisdom is guiding all the affairs of the universe, to know that His righteousness triumphs, that His great love and pity yearn over all men ; to draw nearer to Him and to call Him *my Father* ; this is deep, delicious, unutterable rest to the soul. To put off the burden of our care from the tired shoulder

and let Him carry it for us, home cares, business worries, soul troubles, church work, national affairs, fears about the future—to lay them all upon Him Who careth for us, this is rest. To pass up from the toss and turmoil of the earth, away into the secret place of the Most High; to find in the Eternal God our refuge, to feel that underneath us are the everlasting arms, to be quite sure of His love as our very own;—this is the rest which His love and our need alike urge us to seek as a necessity of healthy spiritual life.

“Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon.”



The Outer Life of Holiness

LIFE is from within, and in itself hath power to shape and bloom and ripen. Do not let us be always pulling it to pieces doubtfully, or fettering it suspiciously with all kinds of constraint and restraint. Healthy life anywhere must have some generous freedom.

Yet there are side growths and sproutings which need the pruning knife, and outside there are forces that may blight and wither and even destroy it. Therefore watch.



CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

The Outer Life of Holiness.



WE have dwelt upon the Inner Life of Holiness, as set forth in the sixth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. We have seen that, born again, we are brought into the deepest, closest, and most abiding relationship, out of which grows the Father's claim upon our love and service, and out of which grows our claim upon Him as sons.

And now we come forth from the Father's Presence, and go out into the midst of men. What is the first peril against which we have to guard? We find it in the opening words of the seventh chapter.

"JUDGE NOT."

It is strange, almost startling, to find this in the forefront of the precepts about the Life of Holiness. It scarcely seems an offence ; or, if an offence at all, it is surely one of the lightest. Who was ever troubled with anxiety to keep this precept ? or who was ever troubled with much grief for having broken it ? Yet its position indicates its great importance. Let us earnestly set ourselves to get at the heart of this command.

There are two or three things which it certainly cannot mean. It cannot mean *that we are not to discern between good and evil*. It does not mean that we are to paint black white because it looks better—that we are to tell lies or think lies and call it charity. It does not mean that we are to baptize foul things with pretty Christian names, and think we have regenerated them. Niggardliness is not to be called "the prudence that withholds." Miserliness is not to be called "economy." Ill-temper is not to be called "nervousness ;" dishonesty is not to be softened into "misfortune."

Judge not does not mean that. There never was a time when the world needed more fierce, unsparing, whole-hearted indignation against moral wrong than to-day. And there certainly never was any who burned against all forms of evil with such an abhorrence as He who said, *Judge not*. With might and main, with a keen eye and a bold tongue, with both hands and all the heart, in God's name let us set ourselves against cruelty and vice and corruption and hypocrisy, wherever we can find it.

And yet, JUDGE NOT.

Nor does this mean that we are not to try and form an estimate of a man's character, or of his actions, when duty calls to it, or when important trusts depend upon the judgment or relationships involving sacred interests. Such judgment is in itself a careful, earnest, righteous act, neither indulging any personal curiosity nor ministering to any evil.

Nor does it mean that we are not to form an estimate of men in their public character, or in relation to their public work, or that we are not to

form any opinion of each other's character, as earnest or indolent, gentle or harsh, weak or strong. Yet, here we *may* be standing on the verge of the forbidden.

If it were only in relation to others, these judgments might well be matters against which we should be on our guard. There is, perhaps, no one power which we all share so largely as the power of shaping each other's opinions of other people. It is a power that is by no means dependent upon opportunities of knowing, or gifts of perception, or general trustworthiness. One might almost be tempted to think that the gossip is most successful when least hampered with such conditions. Think how lightly and easily our judgment of others is affected. We require of the physician, the lawyer, the engineer, the expert in every branch of knowledge, that he must have qualified himself, and assured us of his skill before we take his opinion. The judge will not allow the jury to receive any hearsay evidence, any evidence that cannot be tendered on oath, and which cannot be sustained

by direct witnesses. But we allow a passing glance, a brainless chatter, a child's prejudice, a moment's thoughtlessness, to shape our opinion of people for life. And we, in turn, create a like estimate in others.

One meaning of the command is this: *Keep your mind free from needless judgments of others.* Remember how mistaken you may be in your impressions. Remember that there are in all men surface currents that have nothing at all to do with the tide. There are in all of us moods and moments by which we should think it most unjust that we should be judged. "*Therefore, I say unto you, Judge not.*" You are liable to see wrongly, and liable to interpret wrongly even that which you may rightly see. And you are always blind to the inner self, and blind as to the circumstance. How, then, can you presume to judge any man?

But there is another meaning in these words, a far more solemn and earnest one. It is in relation to ourselves that the words have their fullest force.

What we are to guard against is *the judging which comes from a notion of our own moral superiority.*

I have kneeled in the inner chamber of the Divine presence, and have called God Father. I have been admitted to high and holy privilege, and advanced to the honour of this relationship, a child of God. And now as I come forth into the midst of others, *myself, my feelings, my thoughts, my ways*, become the standard by which I begin to measure everybody else. I put on the robes of my dignity and climb up into the judgment-seat of my exalted virtue, and look down upon the less favoured humanity at the bar and pass judgment upon him.

It is this against which the word is spoken. *Judge not.* This self-righteousness—this notion of being better than other people—see how earnestly and solemnly Christ guards us against it. There is in the Master's words a touch of that fiery indignation with which He ever rebuked the Pharisee. And no wonder, *for this is the very essence of Pharisaism*—that hopeless darkness

which Christ Himself could not illumine; for which there was nothing but the most terrible denunciation. This is the spirit which is condemned, the presumption, the self-confidence, the spiritual conceit in which lies the peril of the most hopeless damnation. For is it not a law that holds good in every sphere, that the higher and more complex the organisation the greater is the corruption, if it become corrupt? There is a corruption possible to an egg which is impossible to a stone. It takes an angel to make a devil. Pharisaism is the corruption of great religious privilege and light and knowledge. Therefore, saith the Lord, "THOU HYPOCRITE!" because he is so keen at seeing the mote in his brother's eye, but is blind to the beam in his own; that is to say, that the fault which he may condemn in another is little beside this Pharisaism, this self-righteousness. Nothing can be more utterly destructive of all that is Christ-like within us; nothing is more hopeless as a soil in which to grow holiness. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," the

mourner, the meek, the pure in heart—but here is a swelling conceit, here is the man who triumphs in his own superiority.

And look at the development of this spirit. “*Thou hypocrite,*” saith the Lord. For in that evil which the man denounces with such fiery indignation, he is not thinking of the evil at all. He likes to find in the black contrast that which lends a new lustre to his own white robes. He reproves the offender, not in pity, not in love, but in triumph. And if he forgive him it is only to inflict a further humiliation. Thou hypocrite, finding in the evil of others that which makes thine own superiority stand out against the foil of such an advantageous background.

And out of this sense of superiority comes all the wretched round of Pharisaism—all that is hard, and haughty, and scornful; all that strengthens pride, and all that deepens despair in God’s world. Borrowing a fancied superiority to others in everything, and exalting the sentiments and tastes above morality, because they more obviously

exalt and flatter. And so comes that hideous parody of religion which is its truest crucifixion. A man of gentlemanly demeanour does not suffer in "the religious *world*" because he does not pay his debts—unless, indeed, they are debts incurred in gambling! He may be profane, corrupt, lewd—what of that if he is rich and dresses well? He will be welcomed without dismay. "The religious *world*" is only horrified at him if he drops his *h*'s, or keeps a *small* shop! "Thou hypocrite!"

And yet further out of this judging spirit comes that last and furthest result of Pharisaism, *which can see no beauty in anything*. A self-appointed inspector of nuisances, with a nose for nothing else—never scenting God's violets and roses. Oh, it is pitiable—religious, very religious indeed, and yet a man to whom a large and noble thought is impossible. A great generous impulse would kill him; the heart could not hold it. A sight of God's own sun flooding the world would strike him blind. They suspect the purest. They see

some selfish and sinister end in every charity. They spy out cracks and flaws and chips in everything. Their own exalted self has claimed all their faith ; they have none left for any other. Self has drained every drop of their love. These are the men who came to see Beelzebub in Christ Himself, and could crucify the Son of Man as a blasphemer and traitor.

“ Well, but surely everybody who judges another is not so bad as that,” you say. No ; but the most black and hopeless Pharisaism has its springs in this spirit of judging. They are inseparable, this self-righteousness and these harsh judgments. “ He spake a parable to certain who *trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.*”

And yet, though there be no judgment, let there be caution. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.* Your experience of these holy things is not to be lightly esteemed. On the

one hand do not exalt yourself because of them into a kind of moral superior, and therefore a judge of men ; on the other hand, remember that you have received high and holy mysteries, which many cannot appreciate, or even understand.

And yet again, do not think that these holy things are the high privilege and perquisite of a few favoured ones who have specially commended themselves to God. EVERY ONE *that asketh, receiveth*. It is not because the son is clever, or strong, or brave, or wise, that the father gives him good things, but because he is a father. *How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him !* Not your superiority, but the Father's love has blest you. Now by His blessing you are bound to go forth and love all men as brothers. *Therefore, of all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets.*

Do is the key-word of this seventh chapter. The outer life of holiness is in *doing*. Not in

conscious privileges, not in clearer light, gracious feelings, raptures—it is *in doing*. And this doing stands in the forefront. Because of our high privilege as sons of God, because of communion with Him, we are to come forth into the midst of men with a great brotherliness which longs to bless them. This is the fullest and fairest outcome of holiness, its bloom and beauty—doing unto others as we would that they should do to us.

There is a very common religious living which strengthens selfishness. It climbs the mountain top and there builds its tabernacle, sitting and singing its hymns about Heaven, and perhaps crying deliciously over them. It cannot think how anybody can like to go down amongst those dreadful lepers and frightful demoniacs and out-cast women and the noisy and vulgar people. Be quite sure that the highway of holiness does not lead us up there for *a dwelling-place*. It takes us down into the market-place and teaches us to do our business there, honestly and generously as we

would be done by. It takes us into the lanes and byways of the city and teaches us to see in every want and every sorrow a claim upon our pity and help. It takes us home and helps us to remember how the children feel, and to consider the neighbours and servants. This is what we are to set before us as the outcome of our faith and prayer, *a gracious considerateness for other people*. And that not as busybodies, much less as patrons, but with a simple Christ-like brotherliness, a considerateness that does not only concern itself about men's souls and that which helps them heavenward, but which runs through all the commonest round and ways of the daily life. We are to carry such a sense of indebtedness to our dear Lord and Master that we shall be always trying to make opportunities and outlets to bless others ; we are to live finding in all the daily intercourse with men a hundred fresh channels by which the Father's love may flow into their midst.

For His sake, for the sake of others, for our own sakes, let us strive after this as the fairest

and only satisfying token of a holy life—this unfailing brotherliness.

So we reach the thirteenth verse: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Do is still the key-note of the chapter. We are to get up and press into this highway of holiness. We have heard the sermon, and now it is to be done, for we *are* only what we *do*. *He that doeth righteousness is righteous.* He that *doeth* the will of the Heavenly Father, he and he only shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. By this we are to know false prophets, testing their doctrine by their deeds. Holiness is not in saying, "Lord, Lord!" Pious phrases, pious tones, pious looks, pious professions, count for nothing, unless there is the *doing* of the Father's will. He that heareth and doeth not, builds his house upon the sand; he that heareth and doeth, builds his house upon a rock.

Think what real peril there is in knowing without doing. We may very easily cheat ourselves with the delusion that what is thoroughly familiar to us must have wrought itself into us. We have heard it so often, and believe it as such a matter of course, that we are quite persuaded it must have woven itself by this time into the very fibres of our being. We speak of repentance and faith. "Of course, of course; it is wearisome to be reminded of such commonplace truths," sighs the hearer; and yet repentance and faith are not one whit the more ours because we have heard of them so often; but the hearing may have produced a substituted confidence, like the pillow of goats' hair which Michal set in place of the living David.

And this imposture, true of the most commonplace things, is at once more easy and more perilous when it belongs to a set of truths which we think of with much solemnity, almost with awe, upon which hang the tremendous issues of eternity, which we sing about in our hymns, and pray about

in our prayers. The substitute for life is more apt to impose upon us when it is arrayed in the stately robes of worship, and is set up in a devotional attitude.

And greater still is the power of such knowledge to impose upon us if it comes to us as a truth which fills the imagination with a glowing splendour, lighting up all the chambers of the imagery like a sun, illuminating our dull consciousness, and filling us with a sunny brightness. Such a reception of the truth the more readily becomes the brilliant substitute for doing it.

And yet, perhaps, most of all are we tempted to put knowing in place of doing when the hearing of the word really moves upon the heart, filling us with the thought of great triumphs, girding us with sublime resolutions, transforming our poor little life into a thing of amazing possibilities and glorious hopes. So for a brief hour we have listened, heard, believed it all. We are astonished at the doctrine. We acknowledge the authority. What more is there?

“ENTER YE IN.”

Raptures, resolutions, glowing visions, great desires—there is no holiness in these. We must get up, rousing ourselves ; and we must press in, meaning it and striving earnestly—for holiness is in *doing*, and in doing the will of the Father which is in heaven.

Look at Israel on the shores of the Red Sea, and listen to their song of triumph. Was there ever such a glowing assurance of possession as that which rang out in their song that day ? Not of triumph over Egypt only, but what a confidence that the land of Canaan was theirs ! Jerusalem, the holy city itself, and the stately splendours of the Temple, seemed already to belong to them.

“Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid : sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. . . . All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them ; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be

as still as a stone ; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" (Exod. xv. 13-17).

Yet forty years afterwards they are still outside, and the word is spoken : " Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you, as I said unto you." Theirs by promise, theirs by glowing visions, theirs by triumphant hope. Yet it was not theirs until *they had set foot upon it*. They could only make it theirs by *occupation* and by *appropriating* it. Till then, with all their promises and hopes, they had only the wilderness, the sky of brass and stretch of dreary sand ; restless pilgrims were they, instead of being at home amidst the vineyards and olive-trees. Knowing about it, singing of it, longing for it, availed them nothing. They had to enter in and *possess* it. Holiness is thine and mine, dear

reader, when we will get up and enter into it, in *Christ's name*, in *Christ's strength*, in CHRIST HIMSELF.

Think aright of the strait gate. We read it as if it meant this—that I am to come to Christ for forgiveness, and then I must strive and crush through this narrow way as well as I can in my own strength. And we soon learn that it is all a dreary failure. *Christ Himself* is the strait gate. "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Because we mistake the door we fail. Christ Himself is the way, the truth, and the life.

There often is a preparatory struggle, but Holiness itself need not be a struggle.

This is a point which perplexes some. We learn that Holiness is not a struggle, it is a victory. It is not a trying, but a trusting. And yet this phrase, and the whole figure, suggests difficulty, struggle. Think of Christ Himself as the strait gate, and all is plain. My struggle must be

directed to this one end—to find Him, to be in Him, to dwell with Him. Holiness is a power in Christ, not a blessing in me apart from Christ, and I have it so long as Christ is mine, and only then. Christ is Himself the way, the highway of holiness. My struggle and the energy of the Holy Ghost are to be put forth to this end, as the Apostle teaches us: “That He would grant you to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” Then out of that indwelling comes all else: “To the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Do let us note clearly the *purpose* of our effort and striving. It is not to become the sons of God. It is to *receive Christ*, for, “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” Our *doing* must be an up-

growth from our knowledge of Christ. For whilst there is a knowing Him that does nothing, *there is also a doing much which knows Him not.* "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." It was a doing that lived in no communion with Him; that never listened for His voice, or waited upon Him to know His will, or came back to Him to render the account. The "wonderful works" which had not their root in Him, drawing from Him their life and strength, He denounces as iniquity.

Then our Lord closes the sermon with the parable of the two builders: he that heareth, and doeth; and he that heareth, and doeth not. The figure continues the line of thought which immediately precedes the parable. Each house was a doing—a labour. Probably, building on the sand is the greater labour of the two. But the wise

man's labour was to get on to *the Rock*. As soon as that was his foundation the Rock gave its strength to the whole building. Every stone in it was firm, because the foundation was good. THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST. Our strength is in building on Him. To separate the sayings from Christ, and then to try and do them in our own strength, is also to build our house upon the sand.

This, then, is the point at which knowing passes into doing. It is when we come *unto Him*, and give ourselves and all belonging to us right up to Him for His service ; and we take Him as our strength for service, receiving Him as our Saviour and Helper as well as our King and Lord. Then in His strength we live our life of holiness, referring instinctively to Him our work and pleasure, asking, "*What wilt thou have me to do ?*" waiting upon Him to know His will, and then doing it, so that all the life is His service, and we can think of no higher heaven than to be always pleasing Him.

It is very needful for us to see this clearly—

the *aim* of our striving. Take as an illustration the words of Peter: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist." How do we read this? Is it that we are to set ourselves resolutely to resist the devil, and then he will flee from us? That if I make up my mind and stand firmly against him, the enemy is not only powerless, but he will be driven back baffled and beaten? Is this the lesson that Peter learnt from his encounter with that old lion? Has he forgotten the words of his watchful Master: "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not"? Turn to the passage again, and see what else there is: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." That first,—have no confidence in yourselves, but come down, be weak and little, and low enough to creep in under the mighty hand of God for shelter; "casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you"—this care as well as all other, the care of

being taken care of. *Thus sheltered and screened,* resist the devil, steadfast in faith—in *faith*, that is the hand that holds to the Lord.

Think what a cruel mockery it were if the shepherd should say, "Little lamb, be sober, be vigilant, the old lion is about. Be not so eager after thy buttercups and daisies as to keep no sharp look-out ; and if he comes upon thee, stand up bravely against him, and he will run away." Then the shepherd goeth away over the hills and home. The lamb scarce ventures so much as to nibble, in the eagerness of its watch and in its fears. And lo, with the darkness there cometh the lion. What of watchfulness and brave resistance? One stroke of that paw, and the lamb is dead! Is that it? Then let him who knoweth anything of his own heart despair. Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

No ; thou and I, my brother, are no match for the old lion. Be sober, be vigilant, be not so eager after anything that *thou dost suffer the Good Shepherd to go far from thee. Keep looking up that*

thou mayest see Him. Thy safety is only in His presence; thou canst rest only in His shadow. Cast all the care of thy safety upon Him, and then let all thy thought and prayer and effort be to keep close to Him. The only peril lies where Peter found it, in following Him afar off. John was too close to His Lord to be tempted to deny Him. Right in under that mighty Hand is the place of our resistance.

Thus the practical Apostle James puts it. "Submit yourselves therefore to God." "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." Our effort is to get near to God and to keep there, *then* we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge," where I run and hide from my foes—Then "I will say of the Lord, He is my fortress," where I turn and fight against them. "Surely He shall deliver thee."

Mr. Boardman tells us that one day he was passing through a large city, and having an hour

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to spare, he called upon an old friend, a shot manufacturer. As they were sitting together his friend asked him "if he would like to have the world under his feet?" Mr. Boardman understood the suggestion that they should go to the top of the shot tower, and at once fell in with the proposal. Presently he reached a passage in which he saw a stone staircase going winding up into the darkness, and he began to mount the steps.

"No," said the friend, "you are going wrong. It is down here."

Mr. Boardman stopped and thought there was some mistake. "We are going up to the top of the tower, are we not?" he asked.

"Yes," said his friend, "and you must go down here to get there. *That* is the old way; dark and dusty and full of cobwebs. But you would find a door near the top that is nailed up now. You would only knock your head and get covered with dust, and then have to come down again. This is the way." And he pointed to two or three steps that went *down*.

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"Going down is a strange way to get up," he thought.

"Now all you have to do is to sit still."

"But I can never get up by sitting still, surely," said Mr. Boardman.

"Trust me," was the reply, "and you will see."

Instantly they began to rise. They were on a lift; and in two minutes they stepped out high above the city, to find the world under their feet.

This is our victory—coming down to get up. Trusting Him, and then sitting still with Him. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

So the Sermon on the Mount ends. Yet it is very beautiful and blessed to carry it on a little bit further, to the incident that immediately follows, if, indeed, it does not grow out of the sermon. Remember, again, the "unto Him" with which the sermon begins. "And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was

set, His disciples came *unto Him* : and He opened His mouth and taught them." Then turn to the "unto Him" with which it ends : "And when He was come down from the mount, great multitudes followed Him. And," so St. Mark says, "behold, there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

Think of the leper and of all the voices that bade him be clean. How all his own moral sense, and all his efforts to hope, and all his struggles, his medicines and spells, all had said unto him *Be clean*. But the word was without authority. The law stood over him and demanded of him that he be clean, but it was powerless to help him, and could only drive him forth a branded outcast. Think of any who should meet him and bid him "Be clean." Poor fellow ! it only mocks him to talk so. "Ah, it is what I long to be," he sighs, "and I have tried every way I can think of."

But now he kneels at the feet of Jesus. Now the Lord bends over him in tender compassion.

He speaks—oh, so much more than a word—BE CLEAN. So, as the ear drinks in the music of that voice the heart leaps with a new strength ; the wasted, heated weariness is gone ; life comes back to him, fresh, pure, delicious, like the life of a little child. Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

There for us, too, is the blessing that we need, but only there—IN HIM, AT HIS FEET. As He bends over us in His compassion, as His hands are laid upon us, as the words drop from His lips, the blessing is ours. The King's command, and yet so much more than a command as He speaks it, a word having authority : "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*"



Defeat and Victory

HOLINESS is very much a matter of aspect. We are changed by beholding ;—therefore very much depends on the way in which we look.

Once in the happy month of May I walked with a friend in his orchard, marvelling at the exquisite show of dainty blossoms, white and pink ; the varieties of trees setting off each other and lending new charms of beauty. Then we came toward the house, and near it stood a tree without a blossom, every leaf blackened and withered.

“How is this?” I asked.

“Ah,” said my friend, “this faces the east—those all look south ;—that makes the difference.”

Some people live looking within at their failures.

Some people live looking around at their hindrances.

Some people live looking up at their Saviour ;—they face the sunny south.



CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

Defeat and Victory.

“Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away.”—PSALM lxxv. 3.

HERE is defeat—“*Iniquities prevail against me.*” Here is victory—“*As for our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away.*”

The Psalmist looks *within*, and there all is helpless. He looks *around*, and all is full of hindrance. Looking thus, he sees only sin and self, self and sin. A gang of thieves, fierce, threatening, greedy; and in their midst this poor, trembling I, stript, wounded, and half dead, vainly struggling to be free. He looks *up*, and then even self is forgotten. He sees Jesus only. Ah! what

blessed company is He! Robber hordes are led away captive, goods are restored, wounds are healed, fear itself is slain, peril is forgotten, all is triumphant and rapturous. "As for our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away."

There is much earnest religion that lives in the dreary compass of these first four words, and never gets a glimpse beyond it. Who is not familiar with the sigh, the sad face, the look of weary failure: "I don't know how it is, but I can't get on at all. It really seems no use for me to try. I do want to be religious, I'm sure, and I do try too. But it seems as if the more I try the worse I am. I have got stirred up on a Sunday, and on Monday I have gone out and meant to be everything I should be, and really tried hard, and before I knew it, sin has got the upper hand again, and I have been back just where I was. I suppose I can't be like other people."

Well, you are like David at least; and a good deal like everybody else too. You are right; it is no good trying, and if we cannot find something

better than trying, we must despair. This is the truth that every man has proved many times: "I am no match for my sins. Iniquities prevail against me."

But do not put a full stop there—because it is no good our trying. What then? Give up? No. Fetch in One who can help us. "As for our transgressions, THOU shalt purge them away." The moment we bring the Lord in, that moment defeat is turned to triumphant deliverance. Write that up in golden letters—THOU. And do not find in this word only a trembling hope, or a wondering wish. Listen to its full assurance—THOU SHALT. There is but one result that can warrant the agony of Calvary; there is but one result that can satisfy either our blessed Saviour or ourselves; and that is our being conquerors over sin.

And not only amongst those who are seeking the Lord is this a frequent experience, but, strangest and saddest of all, it is sometimes the experience of those who have found Him. There are not a few who trust the Saviour for forgive-

ness, but who slip back again into the old life of self-help for getting on any further, and so, of course, there comes the old failure. We hear again the weary moan and dirge, "I can't get on; I am so weak, and so tempted, and there are so many difficulties and hindrances." It is the dark experience of these few words, "Iniquities prevail against me." Nothing but self and sin, sin and self; a round of trying, and struggling, and failing. And no wonder, for it has shut out the Lord. There is no more strength in a converted man to overcome sin than there is in an unconverted man. It is true of him as of others, "Without Me ye can do nothing." New affections, new desires, new views, are ours with our new life, but it is only in Christ that we can *do* anything.

Look at this swift transition from defeat to victory. He makes no break; he does not wait until he feels better. He looks right up, and instantly help and victory are his. The very moment the Lord comes in there is glorious deliverance. Look up to Him now with assur-

ance. Thank God, we can never find a better cry with which to knock at Heaven's door than a cry for help. And we are never better able to put up that cry than when we feel beaten and helpless. Venture now to put that trembling hand in the Hand of the Great Captain of our Salvation. Look up to Him quietly, resolutely: "Blessed Lord, I am Thy poor, foolish child, so weak, so venturesome, so full of sin, and so beset with hindrance, I can't get on." He bends over us, He stretches out the right hand of His power. "Fear not," saith He, "all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Lo, I am with you alway." Hand in hand with Him the feeblest can look upon the hindrances assured of victory. "As for our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away."

Some time since I was crossing the river Tamar in a ferry-boat. Just as we were going to push off from the pier a shout told us that there was yet another passenger. There came a man, ragged and lame, shuffling with bare feet on

the slippery stones to the boat. He hobbled on board, and then we were off.

I was near enough to the poor fellow to have a word with him.

"How far are you going?" I asked.

"London, sir, if I can only get there," he answered.

"And how are you going?"

"Tramp it," said he, gloomily.

"Ah, you wouldn't mind going all the way like this, would you?" He shook his head sadly, and tried to smile, but it was a failure.

Presently the boat reached the other side, and the passengers were dispersed—one in a carriage, and one in a cart, and the rest to the train, that reached London in half a day. But I stood and watched my poor friend limping over the stones as long as he was in sight, and then I turned and went on my way, seeing in him the picture of very many pilgrims to the Celestial City. It is miserably sad that any should go thus, limping and footsore. But hundreds, thousands, think

there is no other way. They trust the Lord to take them across the river of condemnation, and then they step out on the other side and set forth on a dreary tramp in wind and rain, uphill, and over stony roads.

This is not the great salvation which our gracious Lord has provided for us. The trust that takes us across the river would take us right up to the gates of the Celestial City ;—ah, and further than that—right up to the very Throne of God.

Hear now the story of Mr. Fearing and one Captain Faith. Once upon a time, and not long since, it chanced that in the King's castle there dwelt one Fearing. His dwelling-place was dark and comfortless—where but a ray of light fell through a grating. The place was cold and damp ; and the scanty furniture looked more fitted for a prison than the home of a royal guest. It would indeed have been sad, but for one thing which seemed to all else exceeding strange—and that is, that Fearing *need not have dwelt here*. The whole palace was open to him, and he was

as welcome in the King's banqueting chamber as in the dungeon. And yet there he lived, catching occasional glimpses of the King, and hearing the music from afar : " I trust I am one of the King's guests," said Mr. Fearing ; " I think I heard the music."

So poor Fearing spent many months.

Now it chanced one day there hurried past this part of the palace, which was called Condemnation Row, one Captain Faith, who aforetime did know Mr. Fearing well and formerly lived nigh unto him. But as he fell upon his old friend now he scarce could recognise him, for the place was but ill-lighted, so that Captain Faith was like to have passed him by.

" Oh, Captain Faith, sir ! is that you ?" said Fearing, in a melancholy voice.

" Why, Brother Fearing !" cried Faith, astonished, " what ails thee ? What art thou doing here ? And why is thy face so filled with sadness, and thy condition altogether so sorry ? Art thou not one of the King's guests ? What art thou doing here ?"

Then did poor Mr. Fearing answer, groaning, "I cannot tell how it is, but it seems as if I was never meant to live anywhere else. You see I am so weak, and I have so many temptations and trials."

"Well," said Faith, "what else hast thou?"

"You see I am not like you, Captain Faith. I am so timid;" and poor Fearing leaned upon his stick and coughed.

"Well?" said Faith, wondering, and looking about him.

"I don't think it is any good for *me* to think of getting any higher up, though I do very often wish I could."

"What hast thou written over thy door, Brother Fearing, in those black letters?" said Captain Faith.

"The words of the Psalmist, sir, '*Iniquities prevail against me.*' It doth comfort me to think he, too, dwelt in Condemnation Row." And Brother Fearing sighed again.

"Ah! and then a full stop?" asked Faith, almost fiercely.

"I suppose so, sir," said Fearing, rather frightened. "Why not?"

"Because there is none there," Faith answered, "and never was meant to be." Then Captain Faith sighed and spoke more tenderly, "Iniquities and me, me and iniquities! Nothing else. Thou wilt never be better so long as thou dost live here. This place is damp and cold."

"It is that," said Fearing, and he coughed again.

"Agues and cramps and all kinds of diseases will prey upon thee here. Come up to where I live."

"Is it far up, for I can't climb?" asked Fearing.

"Only the next story," said Faith. And then did he straightway take Brother Fearing by the arm, and gently lead him up the King's staircase, out of the gloom into the sunshine, until he brought him to a chamber which looked forth into the King's garden; and at the open casement there came in the sweet scent of flowers, and the singing of birds, and the splash of fountains.

“What a lovely place!” said Fearing, looking in, but afraid to set his foot upon the floor.

“Fear not,” cried the Captain, cheerily, “it will bear thee, brother.”

Brother Fearing let his eyes go feasting upon the place for awhile in silence. Then he turned to his friend, and said in an undertone of very awe :

“It must cost a great deal to live up here with so many luxuries.”

“Cost! Not a farthing, brother. I am one of the King’s guests, and dine daily in the banqueting chamber.”

“So am I,” said Fearing, timidly; “or at least I—I—” and he coughed again.

“Look here,” said Faith, as he took Fearing to the window, and bade him look out into the King’s garden, and he marvelled to see such great manner and variety of delights.

“It is a lovely place,” said poor Fearing, overwhelmed.

“Sit down,” cried Faith, “and I will tell thee the story of how I came by it.

“The place wherein I dwelt aforetime was as dull and cheerless as thy Condemnation Row, and upon my door was graven a cross, and underneath it the words, ‘Iniquities prevail against me,’ even as thou hast. Well, it chanced one day that the King stood at my door, and He read that which was written, and methought His face grew sad as He read it.

“‘Wouldst Thou, my Lord, that I should write something else?’

“‘Wilt Thou follow Me?’ He said tenderly. And instead of going before, He Himself took me by the hand and brought me hither. He led me within the door, and pointed over it to that which was written thereon. Canst thou read it, brother?”

Then Fearing looked, and there over the door was written in gold the one word, THOU, and on either side of it the rest of a sentence: “As for our transgressions, THOU shalt purge them away.”

“Well,” Captain Faith went on, “the King bade me tarry there, saying it was fitter for a king’s guest than was Condemnation Row. And

here have I dwelt ever since, and by the King's grace here do I mean to stay."

"I should think so," said Fearing, growing bolder as he listened.

"That is the secret of it all," and Faith, as he spoke, pointed to the word in letters of gold—THOU. "In the gloomy place below it was all I—I—I—*My* weakness and *my* temptation ; my troubles and my trials. And up here it is all THOU. *The King*, the glorious Lord who always maketh us to triumph. Ah, it doth make such a difference !"

Now, as they two talked together, the King Himself came in, and Mr. Fearing got him up in haste, and having bowed unto His Majesty, made as if he would hurry forth from His presence. But the King took him by the hand graciously, and spoke tenderly to him. "Thou art most welcome—do not leave us ; I have often wished that thou wouldst make a better use of Me, My son. What wouldst thou that I should do for thee ?"

Then Fearing found new courage in the King's grace, and falling upon his knee, he said, "My Lord, I would that Thou wouldst write that on my door," and he pointed to the golden THOU, and the words on either side of it.

"I have long wished that thou wouldst suffer Me to do it," said the King.

And forthwith Fearing left his cell, and found himself in a place of beauty in sight of the King's garden, and sitting henceforth daily at the King's table. And he did afterwards become one of the King's own knights, and was known henceforth as Sir Valiant.

But he never forgot how much he owed to the noble Captain Faith. "Dost thou remember thy words, brother?" he would say; "it used to be all I, I, I,—my sins and me. But now it is THOU;" and he would point to the letters of gold. "Ah! what a wonderful difference it makes!"

Christ's Love to the Church

THE truest consecration, perhaps the only possible to us, is in receiving Jesus.

I cannot give myself up wholly and once for all to God ;—there is within me a strife of wills, division and confusion, “another law in my members.” The earnest desire of to-day becomes to-morrow a dulled indifference ; my highest and most ardent purposes so soon get wearied and discouraged, and fall asleep by the way.

But I can receive Him—He loves me, and has given Himself for me, THAT HE MAY PRESENT ME TO HIMSELF, HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.



CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

Christ's Love to the Church.

“ Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it ; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”—EPHESIANS v. 25, 26, 27.

I.—WHO IS THE CHURCH ?

Christ loved the world ; we know what that means, and can all come within its embrace. But the Church, what is that ? I think the figure of the text, and all the drift of it, help to set it before us very clearly and blessedly. The Church, whatever it is, is that which Christ loves with another and a different love from His love to the world. For the world there is the love of yearning pity ;

a boundless benevolence ; a great deep longing to bless all men. So let us seek to interpret all things in the light of this love ; happy he who, when he cannot interpret them, yet rests in that love still, assured that at the back of all things, the very heart of the universe and yet encompassing it, is the great, unutterable, unchanging love of God.

But for the Church there is more than the love of benevolence, of pity. There is the love of possession ; the love of complacency ; the love of delight ; the love of the Bridegroom to the Bride ; of the Husband to the Wife. Do not our hearts long within us, "Show me the hidden way into this love of Thine, O Lord, the love Thou hast to the Church."

Can we be born into this love by magic rite, baptisms, and sacraments? Magic rite cannot open the way for love. Love is personal, not of ceremonies and forms, but of the heart. Is it a matter of creeds and methods of worship, and distinctive names? Nay, love is, I say again,

betwixt heart and heart, not a matter of intellectual notions, and ways of stating thought. The Church is what, then? Not that which is holy—"He gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it." Not that which is trained and taught—"that He might cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." What, then, is the Church which He loves with the love of delight and possession? Surely there can be but one answer. Forms, creeds, methods, sacraments, cannot create the Church; they may minister to its life, and do. But the Church of Christ is the whole body of those who have heard the voice of love and yielded to it. Every one who has *accepted* Him as He comes to us in His unutterable grace. All who have given themselves to Him, to love, honour, and obey Him,—this is the Church. This constitutes Church membership, a personal relation to the Lord Jesus Christ as supreme Head and Lover. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. The Church is just everybody who lets Christ love

him, and the way into the Church is letting Christ love us, listening to Him, believing Him, yielding ourselves to Him. Are we amongst these? There may be a belief in Christ; there may be an assured conviction that He loved all the world and died for all men on the Cross; there may be an ordering of our lives in obedience to the New Testament teaching, a rigid, exact, fierce obedience; and yet we may not know Him as our own Love, heart love,—love that embraces and cleaves to Him,—love that leans upon Him for strength and looks to Him for guidance, and rests in Him for satisfaction,—this is the condition, the only condition, of membership in His Church. Membership in the visible Church there may be without belonging to Jesus, and we may belong to Him without belonging to any visible Church. Let us urge this upon ourselves. We want to be amongst those whom Christ is going to sanctify and cleanse, whom He loves as He bids husbands love their wives. Am I amongst these? Yes, if I know Him, and love Him, and accept Him as

my Lord, and seek to serve and please Him. This is His Church.

II.—THE PURPOSE OF HIS LOVE.

Let us ask earnestly, “Why, O Lord, hast Thou loved me thus? How couldst Thou give Thyself for me? Alas, I am selfish, earthly, vain; so blind to Thy charms, my glorious Lord; so slow to understand Thy will; so half-hearted in doing it, letting slip so many opportunities of pleasing Thee, sometimes doubting Thee! sometimes disobeying Thee! sometimes even ashamed of Thee! Why this love to me?”

Listen to the answer from the Master's lips—
“I have loved thee and given Myself for thee, that I might sanctify and cleanse thee with the washing of water by the Word; that I might present thee to Myself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.”
 Let us dwell upon the Lord's glorious purpose, until we begin to see something of its amazing blessedness. Bring it alongside the poor and shallow thoughts of God which often content us:

—“O God, take care of me, and feed me, and clothe me, and take me to Heaven when I die, for Jesus Christ’s sake, Amen.” Think how often that great love wherewith He loveth us, all the story of Bethlehem, and of Gethsemane, and Calvary, is dragged down to mean no more than this :—He loved me and gave Himself for me that I might not go to hell, but be happy and comfortable in heaven for ever and ever ! Ah, what a grief it is to the blessed Lord if we thus degrade the great purpose of His coming ! Can you think of a prince who has loved some poor maiden to the death ? He has run all risks and endured all miseries for her sake, and now he seeks to adorn and beautify her according to the largeness of his love and the dignity of her position. And there is no care for it all on her part, no thought of it, no delight in his presence, no worthy estimate of his regard ; just a thanking him for enough to eat, and for taking care of her. Oh do let us, for our dear Master’s sake, rouse ourselves to think of His great longing concerning us, and respond

to it, that all the traces, and spots, and effects of sin should be utterly and for ever gone. Think how that He tends over us with all the consciousness of His great power, and longs to enrich us with all the treasures of His grace. "All that I have is thine," saith He. How He would array and beautify us with heavenly gifts; in place of our ill-temper and selfishness and fear, He would give us gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love. He would ennoble us with an unfailing truthfulness and a quiet courage. He would endow us with a tender, thoughtful, quick-eyed, understanding of His will. He would so set the helm of our lives as in all things to please Him. To do this in me, He has given Himself in all the shame and agony of the Cross; for this He has spared no sacrifice and shunned no depth; and now in His high glory His heart is set upon this purpose, and He is making all things work together for this supremest good.

Think of Him who loves us so much, having this power to sanctify and cleanse us. And now

He asks us to yield ourselves up to Him for this end. He entreats us to let Him fulfil all that His love desires, to let Him bestow all that He has purchased for us.

Think how sin in His beloved and chosen degrades and dishonours Him. Think how it grieves Him, since he has done so much to rid us of it. Think how sin in us must really *hurt* and *shock* Him.

We are told that what pain is in us, is in some of the lower animals only a numbed sensation, a kind of dulled sense ; that it is not pain. As you rise in the scale of organization and nervous development, you get an increased power of suffering, until, in some highly strung nervous conditions, pain becomes a maddening anguish. Is there not something like this in the moral world ? Sin is, to our dulled consciousness, scarce a smart or a pain, but even with us there is a condition of spirit wrought within us by the Holy Ghost, when sin becomes an anguish, a burden intolerable ; a broken heart is not too strong a term to tell of it.

Reason itself has sometimes been overthrown by the anguish of sin felt by a quickened moral sense. Can you carry this thought on until you reach the perfect moral consciousness of Christ, our Lord? Sin is to Him a real pain, an anguish, of which we can but most faintly think. And in us His chosen, His beloved, how He must long to get rid of it! He loved me and gave Himself for me, that He might save me from what is the true Hell, the burning fire, the gnawing worm, — that He might save me from my sins. Now, how can we bring this purpose of His as an abiding reality into the root of all our daily thought and plans and purposes? How can we correct and adjust our aims and efforts by this great purpose of our Lord? How can we respond to it, and live up to it? There is but one way. It is in earnest and steadfast prayer for that which St. Paul prays for here in the first chapter of this epistle—that the Father would give unto us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of our understanding being enlightened

that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.

III.—LET US GLANCE AT THE FULFILMENT OF HIS PURPOSE.

Notice that He Who loves us claims the work as His own. *He* loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that *He* might sanctify and cleanse it, and that *He* Himself might present it to Himself a glorious Church. He does not leave His poor Bride to deck herself for Him—her very poverty is the room and opportunity of His great love. He comes with all His grace and gifts and mighty power. He does it all. As we come into the Church by believing and accepting Him and His love to us, so we are to be made holy by yielding ourselves to Him for the fulfilment of His great purpose. He is grieved that we come to Him for forgiveness, and then go away to struggle at our own sanctification, seeking to make ourselves

fit to be presented unto Him. He will do all if we will give ourselves right up to Him, bringing all we have and all we are for Him to have His own way with us.

And do not let us perplex ourselves about the processes of our sanctification. I know that the precious blood cleanseth from all sin. I know not *how* it cleanseth. I know that the Holy Spirit dwells within us for our sanctification ; but I cannot discern His work from the Redeemer's. I know that this is the will of God—even our sanctification, and His will is what He seeks and furthers by His power. Enough for me to know that as in the Creation the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity bent over the dust, and fashioned the man in the image of God, so now, to renew me in that image and likeness, the Sacred Trinity bends over me.

Enough for us that our sanctification is of God—it is all Divine. Here our hopes can find a sure resting-place, and they can fly hence into the Highest Heaven. We know not what infinite provision He hath made for the fulfilment of His

purpose, but we can trace something of it here. He Who made the worlds, the great sun, and the stars that garnish the Heavens, He Who bade the holy angels be ; the seraphim and cherubim before the throne—He cometh to sanctify and cleanse us and to present us to Himself. He Who so loved us as to give His only begotten Son ; He Who came down to all the poverty and want and grief of earth, Who hung on the Cross in our stead, and in His unutterable love ; He Who anointed Christ for His great work, and wrought within the mighty men of old ;—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost unite in this great purpose concerning thee and me, my brother,—that we may be holy. What more can we ask or think ?

And let us remember again, that He Who seeketh thus to sanctify and cleanse us is Himself the Lord Whose kingdom ruleth over all. Then all the arrangements of the daily life are for this end, that we may be sanctified and cleansed. Oh, if we could but see it, believe it, act upon it, the worries, the petty annoyances, the gains, the

pleasures, the things that we count hindrances, the wrongs and disappointments,—these are all helps, the hands that shape us, if we will, in God's own image. These are our opportunities for courage, trust, endurance ; for hope, for love which makes us like God. *There are no hindrances to holiness outside us,—they are all within ; and if Christ dwells within us, reigning there, then all things outside are helps, and cannot be otherwise.* “The wind was contrary to them,” and they were toiling in rowing only till Christ came. “He went up unto them and the wind ceased.” Every wind is fair when He is on board.

This is the true purpose of all things and of all time—our sanctification. We shall find this in the heart of all things, set there by God, if we will look for it, even as food is set in the green herb, and as metals lie in the dull stones. So is holiness enwrapped in every chance and change and circumstance if we have but given ourselves right up to Christ, and taken Him supremely as our own, our Best and Dearest, the Fairest and altogether Lovely.

IV.—THE CLAIMS OF HIS LOVE UPON US.

He demands that we appreciate His love to us, and that we consider the responsibility of such a position. If a man has great wealth, if he has commanding abilities, if he has high position, we talk of his responsibility, and rightly enough. But what position in the world can weigh with this? To be related by so sacred and tender a relationship to the King of Heaven, loved with such a love, called into such a closeness of intimacy with Him, sharing in a purpose of such unspeakable glory! Nehemiah was but cup-bearer in an earthly court, yet his position enabled him to restore the broken fortunes of Jerusalem. Esther was but the trembling bride of an Eastern Despot, and yet how great a deliverance she wrought for her people! To us the High King of Glory gives such tokens of His love, such opportunities, such boundless privilege, such a destiny; He, too, claims from us that we appreciate our position, that we avail ourselves of His power and love, to bless us, and enrich us, and ennoble us with all graces.

Surely He is grieved when He finds the bride with such a high calling, only sighing over the offers of His grace, as if He did not mean it; as if He interposed some barrier that made His offers a mockery. He is grieved when He finds all the heart and energy going out in care of the world,—in pleasures, anywhere, everywhere; and for Him but a distant worship, cold and fearful, asking little at His hands and expecting nothing.

Muse upon it until the fire of your expectation is kindled. Our highest, fullest holiness is not an extraordinary work, to accomplish which our Blessed Lord has to go out of His way. We have not, like Moses, to climb up into the lonely heights of the Mount of God in awful solitude, and to wait for the vision to pass before us. Holiness lies right in the highway of God's love to us. Everything else that Christ has done for us leads straight on to it. Bethlehem and the wilderness, Gethsemane and the Cross, find their only warrant, their compensation, their satisfac-

tion, in our being made holy. Holiness is assuredly no strange work with the Lord. It is of all things His readiest and most natural.

To make us holy is the joy of the Lord. For His own sake, and for our own, He Who delighteth in mercy finds the fulness of His delight in fulfilling His mercy's largest purposes. His gladness is to adorn and beautify His bride with the great purchases of His grace.



The Temple Cleansed

"I HAVE been reading about holiness," said one to me the other day ; "I do wish I could find it."

"Find IT?" I said, "you mean find HIM. Holiness is in Jesus. 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.'"

A week after my friend came to me with a radiant face : "I have found it in HIM."

We think and talk of holiness as if it were getting into the King's garden, climbing over a wall by a tremendous effort, or getting in as a great favour, and plucking a flower which we wear in its fragrance for a day, then keep it pressed and treasured, a faded remembrance of the King's grace. No, holiness is ours only when we open the door of our heart unto the King that He Himself may come in and make this barren place the garden of the Lord, a very paradise wherein He may walk and talk with His child.



CHAPTER THE NINTH.

The Temple Cleansed.

“Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple them that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting ; and when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen ; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables, and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence, make not My Father’s house an house of merchandise.”—JOHN ii. 13-16.



THE Lord Jesus had gone up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. It was the first public declaration of Himself ; the sublimity and solemnity of the great work on which He was entering filled His soul. But His was the large and tender heart which was ever quick to receive impressions from that which was

about Him. He could not come along His way from the North country to Jerusalem without rejoicing in the beauty and gladness of the world. It was the most delicious season of the year. The hills were bright with a hundred hues of flowers, and in the valleys the corn was swayed by the breeze. Our own familiar birds—the thrush, the lark, the blackbird, gladdened all his way.

It is pleasant to think of Jesus going thus to the Temple. To the Son of God surely this earth was “the Father’s house.” The great sun lit it up with splendour, and the deep blue of heaven bent in blessing over it. Then as He came on the fair country was slowly lost in clouds of dust and din of crowds, until, as He passed through the gate of the city, all the beauty, the stillness, the simplicity, the purity of “the Father’s house” was left behind. The frightened cattle were being driven along the narrow ways amidst the frightened people. Sellers of all sorts of wares pressed their goods upon the passers-by, for

the feast had come to be a great annual fair.¹

Nearer the Temple the ways were more thronged, and the confusion was worse. But worst of all was within the courts of the Temple itself. The part intended for strangers was let to the cattle-dealers, and the poor proselyte had just to worship God where best he could. All the holy place was filled with din and disturbance—lowing cattle, bleating sheep, the shouts of those that sold, and the chaffering of the buyers. Potters praised their clay dishes and their ovens for the evening sacrifice. Dealers in wine, in salt, in everything that the services required, cried up their wares. The cages of the doves were piled within the house of prayer. More quietly, but with a greedier craft, the money-changers sat at their tables, exchanging the heathen money for the Temple coin. Noise and filth and stench and greed were everywhere. Little wonder that as Jesus looked about Him He was filled with indig-

¹ See Dr. Geikie's *Life of Christ*, i., p. 469.

nation. Snatching up a rope He knotted it, and with an authority that awed them all, He cried, *Take these things hence!* And forth He drove the sheep and oxen, and bade the dove-sellers begone, and upset the table of the money-changers, sending the money rolling under the feet of the crowd.

The story is full of teaching for us in our pursuit of holiness. Here is the Parable of the Temple, the Parable of the Confusion, the Parable of the Cleansing.

I.—THE PARABLE OF THE TEMPLE.

We are accustomed to think of the Temple itself as filled with types and parables. The ark of the Covenant, within and without; the Priest, the Altar, the Sacrifices—all were full of teaching. *But what was the meaning of the Temple itself?*

It is curious that this should have been so often overlooked. The plan of its structure was remarkable enough to have courted inquiry. It was altogether unlike anything else that was ever

devoted to purposes of worship. Neither Egypt nor Syria suggested its architecture; neither Grecian Temple nor Roman Pantheon nor Christian Cathedral has ever in any way reproduced any faint resemblance to it.

It was not one building, but three courts standing one within another. The first and outermost was the court of the worshippers. The second court, higher than the first, so that all could look up into it, was the court of the sacrifices. There the priests moved, busied at the altars. Beyond this there rose another structure, higher still, and so placed that each worshipper kneeled toward it. It shone with dazzling brilliance, the front being covered with plates of gold, except over the great doors where a golden vine trailed its branches, and there hung golden clusters of grapes. Within the open doors the worshippers could look as far as the immense veil of thick tapestry—blue, scarlet, and purple, woven into a fabric of matchless beauty and of enormous value. This shut in the Holy of

Holies, the dread Presence Chamber of the Great Jehovah.

The threefold arrangement was of God's direct commandment, after the pattern shown to Moses on the mount. It was the plan alike of the Tabernacle and of the first Temple, and again of the second Temple. Here, as Luther suggests, is a striking resemblance to our human nature, if not a type of it. Man, in his threefold nature: body, soul, and spirit. "Destroy this temple," said Jesus, "and in three days I will raise it up"—this spake He of the *temple of His body*.

Let it be noticed, too, that God did not *command* the building of the Temple—He only permitted it. The Divine direction was the Tabernacle—the shifting Tabernacle, that could be taken down in an hour. His glorious Presence needed not the solid marble and the plates of gold. He dwelt within the frail and unsubstantial covering of skins. In this was the truer picture of man, who never continueth at one stay—who hath here no abiding city. The very grandeur

of the Temple blinded men to its first meaning.

Further, the Temple is a picture, if not a type, of man in his *threefold relationship*—man in relation to the material world, in relation to his neighbour, in relation to God. When God is in the Holy of Holies, when man worships Him in the innermost chamber of the spirit, then is he right towards God. And drawing near to God in the appointed way, he is right towards his neighbour; he bows with his nation, knit and bound into one brotherhood by a common dependence on the one Great Father, by a common consciousness of sin, by one great sacrifice, and by one hope and one joy of acceptance and blessing. And then, right with God, and right with his brother-man, the worshipper comes to be right with the material world about him. He gratefully dedicates to God his genius and gifts, his substance and his wealth. Up into God's house he brings of his cattle and sheep, of his oil and wine, of his gold and cedar wood, of his art

and splendour ; and thus he learns to hold them from God, and to use them for God. This is the idea and parable of the Temple—man in his threefold nature serving God ; man finding the threefold relationship secured and consecrated in the Temple.

II.—THE PARABLE OF THE CONFUSION.

These money-changers and dove-sellers, these cattle, and sheep, and oxen here, in the wrong place—all these were only the outermost symptom of a mischief that lay much further in. They had thrust out the Gentile proselyte to make room for all these. So this outside confusion with the lower creation grew up from the fact that the man had got wrong *with his brother*. It always does. Let a man love his neighbour as himself, and all the money that was ever minted will not hurt him. The cattle on a thousand hills may be his, and he may go through as much work and worry as mind or body will bear, but the world will be kept in its right place when he

is right with his brother. Avarice, self-indulgence, covetousness, all these are impossible to the man who keeps right with his neighbour.

But this being wrong with his brother came from another wrong that lay still further back. It always does. *The Jew was wrong with God*—then he was wrong with everything, out of joint with the universe. That is the history of all confusions.

Religion had become very much a thing of tradition, an inherited custom. God was not to them the living God, after Whom the soul thirsted, and in Whom it delighted. They kneeled with lowly tones and confessed their sins, but without any deep contrition. They came with a sacrifice, but without desire or thought of anything further. They heard the benediction spoken, but without any sense of blessing ; only a sigh of relief that it was done. That was the source of the confusion. Every age illustrates it. Then is everything wrong when religion comes to be a round of pious phrases without any grip of faith ; pious tones

without any heart-cleaving to the Lord ; prating about sin, but going on with a self-satisfied goodness ; saying, "Lord, Lord,"—but without hallowed communion with Him, without any earnest effort to know His will, without any denying ourselves to please Him.

Religion without a living God—then all this mischief assuredly creeps in. The service may be very grand, very stirring, very emotional, very solemn,—all that will help men to cheat themselves more perfectly. Many a man likes to be made to feel that life is a sacred and lofty thing—*for an hour* ; he can the better afford to balance such solemnities by frittering life away in a thousand vanities. A man likes to wipe his eyes at the touching story of somebody else's generosity, his emotion makes him a sharer in the good deed ; but that will not stop him from taking his poor neighbour by the throat and demanding his own with usury. Many a worshipper likes to worship awed and entranced amidst solemn appeals or melting music ; and yet he can go straight home

to be selfish, snappish, mean, to feel that life is a dull, colourless, dispiriting thing, when the music is hushed.

Ah, we all of us know too much about this story of the confusion. It is a good deal easier to grow indignant at it in other people than to remedy it in ourselves. Come, let us ask, How can I find the religion that serves God in everything right through the seven days of the week? How can I go home from God's house to be always true, patient, brave, earnestly serving God in all my dealings and doings? Where is the power to be right, to keep right? the power that turns the prayers into life, and brings us always nearer to the level of our best moments?

Thank God, there is an answer. We will hear it presently.

Then came easily the next step in the story of the confusion. They got wrong with the neighbour.

The living God was gone ; then the splendours of the Temple and the costly sacrifices were no more consecrated offerings to the Most High

All these sank down into a flattering of Jewish pride, the pompous exhibition of his own importance. As the Jew moved in these courts, and looked at the marble columns and gilded roof and sumptuous walls, there rose up in his soul a swelling sense of his own superiority, and a scorn of outside humanity. When the living God was gone, the Temple and its services became at once the mother and nurse of pharisaism. "Is not this our great Temple that we have builded by the might of our power and for the glory of our Israel?" All that should have smitten at self, fed and fattened it. Charity, fair charity herself, is turned into a leper by such conceit, and defiles the gold she gives. Their prayers were not *dead* prayers only, they bred corruption, and ministered to the man's vanity. And so, of course, came the ever-growing contempt for his Gentile brother. He who was not born a Jew was an offence to their eyes, a vulgar nonconformist to their Jewish faith,—why should they heed him? These common people of such coarse clay, what place could they

find in this great Temple? Call these brothers! the Pharisee flung his head in contempt, and lifted the jewelled hand to heaven in pious sorrow. What has he to do with them?

Ah, this confusion, too, at least in its beginnings, we want cured. We can be earnest in prayer, we can read the chapter, we can listen to the word—but always and everywhere to be right to those about us! Always to be brotherly; to have love *always* throned in the heart; always to have the mastery of the temper; always to be ready to forgive, to help; always to be unselfish; to know when indignation becomes sin, and when the fire that kindles us is a spark of hell. Ah, thank God, we can find this too. Come, my brother, for this a power is provided. Hope, bravely and earnestly, for we shall reach it presently.

Then the parable of the confusion shows how *they had got wrong with the worldly substance*. Cattle and sheep and tables of the money-changers had got into the wrong places. They were all right in themselves, and needful. Do not find

fault with them. God had made them all, and sent them for blessed uses, but they had got across the border line, and now, here they were bleating and bellowing in the Temple of God.

Here, too, is our confusion. These things have got into the heart, and fill it with din and greed and filth. A pitiable thing, surely, for God and His holy angels to look down on—the man whom God made for Himself, as one having dominion, become a slave to his cattle and his gold! The heart wherein He Himself would come and have His abode, overrun with oxen and sheep! The eternal music of God's love, and the songs of the man's own soul, drowned in the bleating of lambs and the bellowing of calves! He who was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour, become a grocery store, a drapery warehouse, a cattle market, a money office! The heart that was to have held God, and whence help and brotherliness were to come forth for all, dried and shrivelled into a mere Judas' leather purse!

III.—THE PARABLE OF THE CLEANSING.

In the midst of all this confusion there stood Jesus the Messiah, the glorious Son of God. It was a strange sight. This very nation of Israel bound together by the hope of His coming! They point on to Him in every part of their ritual, by almost every prophecy and psalm of their Scriptures, by all the great events of their history; yet all the time they are thinking of Him as afar off! And lo, He stands in their midst, unhonoured, unknown, looking upon all the confusion with grief, and indignant. He knots the cord. He speaks in the fierceness of His zeal and the consciousness of His own supreme authority. And before Him go the oxen and the sheep, the money-tables are upset, the dove-sellers hurry forth with their cages, and once more the court of the worshippers is cleared.

Here is the only deliverance for us, *the incoming of the Saviour*. We have too often a religion that knows only the dead Christ, that looks back to One Who lived eighteen hundred years ago.

We need more than that. There is the religion of the Christ to be, Who is coming again in great glory, and then shall He set all things right and put down His enemies under His feet. By all means let us look back adoringly to Him who bare our sins in His own body on the tree. By all means let us look on joyfully to the triumph of our glorious Lord. But I want a *present* deliverance ; a victory *now*. Look up. The living Christ, the mighty Saviour, standeth in our midst. He comes to make this very Temple His abode ; to put down the confusion ; to hallow all its courts. This is our deliverance, and only this.

Christ Himself in the heart is the only deliverance from the traditional religion or from the dead forms of the Temple service. He reveals the Father to us, and we worship Him in spirit and in truth. We hold communion with Him, and within us is restored the Holy of Holies. We hear the voice of the Father. We have His love shed abroad in the heart. The light of His countenance gladdens us. We have the glorious presence of the King.

We know Him and delight in Him as the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. "We will come unto Him and take up our abode with Him," is a promise that the Master waits to fulfil.

The living Christ within us makes us right with our brother. In Him we find the blessed secret of being always true, and humble, and unselfish, and generous. He makes the crooked tempers straight, and pours into the springs of our life something of His own true brotherliness.

The living Christ within us makes us right toward the things of the earth. He restores us to our first position, as men having dominion over the earth. He only can give within us, for wild confusion, peace. In Him we become the children of God, to love and please Him in all things. In Him we become true brothers of all men, to love and serve them. In Him we become able to keep the world in its right place. Surrender to Him the oversight of all the place, the key of every chamber, and He shall set it right.

But is there not another parable that might be added?—

IV.—THE PARABLE OF THE FAILURE.

By this act of daring enthusiasm, Christ at once stood before the people as a prophet. Elias verily had come. The authorities were shamed by His words into new efforts, and the people were roused by them into new demands. Christ had come, had spoken, had cleared the courts; henceforth they were determined to keep them free from such confusion. Never again should there be any ground for such a reproof. Rules of the utmost strictness were introduced. Notices were everywhere set forth forbidding that any should henceforth go up to the House of the Lord "with a staff in his hand, or with his shoes on his feet, or with money in his girdle, or with a sack on his shoulder, or even with dust on his feet, and no one might carry a burden of any kind through the Temple, or spit within its holy precincts."—(*Geikie.*)

And what was the end of it all—authority, lofty resolutions, stringent rules? Three years later Christ came again, and the place that had been a house of merchandise had sunk down now into *a den of thieves*!

How often we are content with visits from Christ—visits that reprove and shame us! Then we stir ourselves into great purposes and wonderful intentions, and we let the Christ go forth from the Temple whilst we are arranging what we mean to be and to do. And soon it all ends in a new manifestation of our own weakness, and in the darkening of our despair.

Christ only, by His own presence, can set the Temple in order; *Christ only, by His own abiding, can keep the Temple in order.*

This is what the blessed Lord would be to thee and me, my brother. This is the purpose of His coming; this is His great salvation. Do not think of Him only as One in Whom we have the forgiveness of sins, or the hope of getting to heaven. He comes to dwell within us, that He

may make us right with a threefold and glorious rightness ; right toward God, right toward our brother, right toward all things. Open the door of the heart to Him ; He stands and knocks. Kneel at His feet and give Him the possession ; He will come in and dwell in us. His own indwelling shall consecrate the Temple to God, and hallow all its courts.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.”



How Christ comes to dwell in the Heart.

BE still and learn that there is One Who knows us at our worst, knows all the hidden possibilities of evil within us—and yet He does not turn away from us, abashed and hopeless. He bends over us in eager love ; seeks to have us as His friends, near and dear as tenderest care can make us : comes to dwell in us, and by His own indwelling to sanctify us.



CHAPTER THE TENTH.

How Christ comes to dwell in the Heart.



WE have seen that only Christ by His coming into the Temple can set it right; and that only Christ Himself by dwelling there can keep it right. Then follows the great question: How can we secure His coming?

There are two passages that will help us. The first is St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, the third chapter and fourteenth verse: "*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that* CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS BY FAITH."

These Ephesians had been ignorant of self, of sin, of Christ ; without God, and without hope in the world—dead in trespasses. But the Holy Spirit had shown them their need, He had wrought within them a sorrow for sin ; He had lit up the word of truth, and revealed Christ to their hearts. They had trusted in Christ, and *in Him* they had received the witness of the Spirit : “ In Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise ” (i. 13).

The Apostle makes much, very much, of these great spiritual blessings ; and no words about Holiness should ever lead us in any wise to think lightly of these unspeakable gifts. Let us remember with adoring thankfulness what our forgiveness has cost ; that it has come to us through nothing less than the dreadful shame and agony and death of the glorious Son of God. In the very forefront of our greatest mercies let us set this, ever thanking God above all for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

But whilst we make much of forgiveness, *it is not meant that we should rest in it.* Whilst we hold fast to that which we have, yet because we have so much let us expect much more. Because forgiveness is already ours, there comes the longing of this prayer. That gracious Spirit Who has led us to Christ now puts forth His energy within us for another and fuller blessedness, and we are to be strengthened with might in the inner man *that Christ may dwell in our hearts.*

It is pitiable, almost the pitiablest thing under Heaven, this contented blindness to the glory of the great salvation which might be ours ; so poor and needy as we are, and within reach of such wealth, yet scarcely putting forth a hand to feel after it ! What, then, do we want ? This, surely, —first and above everything—a full, clear, abiding vision of the greatness of the salvation that there is for us in Christ Jesus. And so the Apostle prays for this first : *“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him : THE EYES*

OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED ; THAT YE MAY KNOW WHAT IS THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING, AND WHAT THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS ; AND WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TO US-WARD WHO BELIEVE." We need take up this prayer and make it our own, "labouring fervently" until it be fulfilled in us. Only such a glowing revelation of God's purpose in our salvation can check the world's pretensions and uplift us from our dulness and gloom. We want such visions of His power to inspire our hope, and fire our desire, and rouse us to effort. There is a kind of religion that seems to have to go down into the world to get its glow and excitement ; life's dull existence finds there that which quickens and gilds it. Surely he that lacketh those things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his sins. We cannot afford to live without looking out upon the height and depth, the length and breadth, of our possibilities in Christ. Think how it should rebuke the fever

of our worldliness, how it should gather to a sustained intensity our pursuit of holiness, how it should lead us into a spiritual nobility and greatness if we lived further up the mount of God, in view of the revelation that the Holy Spirit would make to us. Ah, what opportunities for blessing and for service lie about us if we had but eyes to see them !

We were coming down a mountain in Switzerland one evening, when a black thunderstorm blotted out the day and all things were suddenly plunged into darkness. We could only dimly see the narrow, dusty footpaths, and the gloomy sides that were swallowed up in deeper gloom. What, then, of the majesty all about us ! heights and depths and wonders ! All was darkness. Then came the lightning—not flashes, but the blazing of the whole sky, incessant, and on every side. What recesses of glory we gazed into ! What marvels of splendour shone out of the darkness ! Think how with us, in us, is One who comes to make the common dusty ways of life resplendent,

illuminating our dull thoughts by the light of the glory of God ; clearing the vision of the soul, and then revealing the greatness of the salvation that is ours in Christ.

Let this prayer go up in earnest longing every day : “ Holy Spirit, enlighten the eyes of my understanding that I may know what is the hope of His calling.”

Then the Holy Spirit puts forth His energy within us to strengthen our desires.

It is pitiable, indeed, that we have so much within reach and see it not. Yet surely it is more pitiable still that we should see so much and yet scarce desire it. Desire ! why, it is almost a deception to use that word to express our languid concern for Divine things. A mere passing thought that stirs a superficial sigh. Ah, how often the stream of our desire is dried up in the world's fierce heat ! Thank God that He is willing to give us the Holy Spirit to be as floods upon the dry ground, and by His coming He fills us again with desires that burst the barriers and go

surging out to God. We need sometimes to be wrapt with a fire of ardent longing after God, a great sense of want and desire consuming us, perishing with very want of God, as David felt: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God,—my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." For this the Holy Spirit is given—to put His mighty energy into our desires, to draw out our souls in longings that stir and throb with the pulses of a Divine power. It may be ours to take hold of the Almighty with His own omnipotence. Be this, too, our prayer: "Give me, O God, thy Holy Spirit, that in His strength my heart may long after Thee!"

Then the Holy Spirit puts a Divine energy into our faith. Doubts are lost, dissolved in the light of His clear shining. Christ is no more One of Whom we have but vacant memories and vague thoughts; we know Him as real and present. We claim Him as our own. There bursts from the heart a triumphant assurance, an exultant

possession, which cries, *My Lord and my God*. We put a bold constraint upon our King and compel Him by our importunity to abide with us.

Then, too, there is given to us by the Holy Spirit *a gracious and tender sensitiveness*. We are no more as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding ; our Master can guide us by His eye. We hear His whispered will and gladly do it. We find in the Holy Spirit help and power to stand and wait upon the King in the busiest moment of our life, setting the aim in all things to this end, *to please Him*. It is as if God's own hand held the helm of our lives, and guided us ; we waiting on His will.

Do you begin to sigh over this, good reader, thinking of a host of weaknesses and hindrances ? Or will you exult in this as *your* possibility, purposed and promised for *you* ? "Blessed Spirit, if this is what Thou art come to do, I thank Thee. It may be mine as freely as any other's. I and my weakness and my hindrances cannot hinder Thee ; my needs are but my claim upon Thy help.

O strengthen *me* with Thy might that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith." And further, *the Holy Spirit puts forth His grace within us for consecration to the Lord and for receiving Him.*

As in the dedication of the Tabernacle—God had planned it all ; it was all according to the pattern seen in the mount. Throughout it all the Holy Spirit had wrought in every worker, even in those that made the garments of the priest as well as in those who wrought the fine gold and precious stones. Now it was complete. Aaron stood in his robes of beauty and glory ; the burnt-offering was ascending to heaven, and the incense filled the court. But God had not yet taken up His abode within the Holy of Holies ; and till He came its end was all unanswered—the finished work was still unfinished. What now was needed? The blood had to touch it all and hallow it ; and then the anointing oil had to rest upon all for consecration. Till then the inner chamber was but a place of empty darkness.

So is our salvation planned of God ; and so

from first to last is it wrought within us by the Holy Ghost. And so is it all to lead up to the Divine indwelling—*that Christ may dwell in your hearts*. Till He come and take up His abode within us the great purpose of all else still waits to be fulfilled. For this the gracious Spirit applies the cleansing blood. He is Himself the anointing; He purges and hallows and consecrates every desire and aim; all the round of business and pleasure and friendship, making us willing to yield all things to the Lord for His will, and to receive Him as the King Who shall sit enthroned upon the heart, on Whom our thoughts wait in loving steadfastness, and to Whom every power may minister in glad service. And not *willing* only—the Holy Spirit puts forth His energy for the *actual and formal surrender of ourselves* to Christ; for purpose and desire sometimes fail because we stop short of the act of transfer. The blessed Spirit leads us forth to greet the Lord, and give Him up the keys, and bid Him welcome.

So then, in our pursuit of holiness, alike for

thought, for desire, for effort, we are dependent upon the gift of the Holy Ghost ; and so for our thought and desire and effort His light and love and power are given. This gift Divine, the beginning and pledge of all gifts, is ours for the asking. Let us draw near with the Apostle, bowing our knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith.

The second passage of Scripture which will help us is in Rev. iii. 20 : " Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : IF ANY MAN HEAR MY VOICE, AND OPEN THE DOOR, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Here is the King of Glory seeking our friendship—to dwell with us in real heart-communion. He is speaking to the Church—to those who had heard the Word of truth, and had yielded to Him the profession of their faith. But He longs for a

closer relationship. "Open unto ME," He saith entreatingly. "Open unto Me that I may come in and sup with thee." He has all gifts, and now stands eager to come in and enrich us with them. He knows all our wants and sorrows, and in all His love entreats us to let Him be our friend and abiding helper.

This is what He has been seeking through all time. Up to this, step by step, all our redemption has led. We can stand at the very gate of Eden and look right down through the ages, until we see this as the great end of it all—Christ standing at the door of the heart knocking and saying, *Open unto Me*. For this, man was made at the first, endowed with reason, ennobled with the dignity of choice and the sacredness of love, that he may dwell in this close and intimate fellowship with God. Then God rests from His labours, for He has found a resting-place, when man's heart becomes His home. Then His "*very good*" is spoken of all things, as if God had nothing more to give, and man had nothing more to wish for.

The Father had found the love of His child, and His child had found in that fellowship the fullest blessedness. Then earth was Paradise.

Then came sin, with its dark severing of man from God, and God from man. But from that closed gate of Eden every step is onward toward this friendship. In the fulness of time the Son of God becomes a little child that He may be *one of us*; going down into all the condition of our humanity—its work, its wants, its sorrows, its loneliness, its fears, its sufferings, its agony, its death. So would He meet us in every path of life and touch us at all points; and by a perfect knowledge and perfect sympathy fit Himself to become the perfect friend and brother of all men, everywhere.

Then He who has become thus one with us lays down his life for his brethren. Now the way of access is open; now in Christ Jesus we who were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

And now what more can He do for us? His great love and our adoring gratitude alike declare

it is finished. He hath suffered these things ; what remains for Him but that He should enter into His glory ? We see Him standing, His face like the sun in its strength ; girt with a golden girdle ; His feet like unto fine brass that burned in a furnace. But come and see the very climax and completion of His love.

Tarry here—we shall see Him pass this way. Ah, what a place is this in which to look for Him, viler much than Bethlehem's stable where the mother laid her first-born ! See, here dwell all evil things ! Gluttony and drunkenness ; brazen lust and crooked covetousness ; envy and hatred muttering evil things ; fierce passion and pride ; and poor blind ungodliness gropes on his way, cursing his misery. Now night cometh. Stillness falls upon the household, and only the lonely watcher wakes within. And now there comes a step along this way. See, One standeth at the door. He lifteth His hand and knocketh. "Open unto Me," He saith. It is the King of Glory ! Not in His majesty and splendour, but

the lowly Brother of us all. "Open unto Me," He saith, entreating.

"This is no place for thee, O King," sighs the watcher. "Here all evil things have their home. Thine eyes should not look upon nor Thine ears listen to that which is within here; much less shouldst Thou come to dwell in such a place."

"Open unto Me," saith He, "and I will come in and sup with thee!"

And lo, as the watcher openeth the door He passeth within, and heaven and earth and hell may look in wonder, exclaiming, "*He is gone to be guest with one that is a sinner!*"

There is the crown of His great love to us.

And how could it be otherwise? His love, so eager and infinite, has urged His coming down to Bethlehem in all its poverty and lowliness; has led Him forth to be homeless, a-hungered, outcast for our sakes. His great love has led Him up the dreadful hill of Calvary, to all the shame and agony and curse of that awful death. Now He has entered into His glory. But how can He

rest? He holds in His hand the great gifts of our salvation; the power that can deliver us from all these evil things within. Oh, it is only like Him that He should come forth again. No height of His glory, no vastness of dominion, no splendid dignities, can make Him forget the soul for whom He had died. His love urges Him again into our midst, and keeps Him standing and knocking. "Open unto Me—now I can bless thee, indeed. Let Me come in and be to thee all that thy heart needs and all that My love desires."

Now *we* have heard His voice, what are we doing? Ah! so many things, instead of opening the door. Because we *are* so busy it may be that we have not opened the door, not surrendered ourselves to Him that He may have us all His own. It is often so;—I have sometimes knocked at the front door, but the good soul within has been so busily talking at the back door that he neither heard nor cared to open it; talking possibly about my coming.

The Master often stands thus and knocks; we

within so busily listening to one another, talking about Him and about opening the door, that we do not hear Him. Some are so busily inquiring of the scribes and chief priests about the Holy One, that they have no time to seek Him. Be still. Wait and listen for His voice.

“I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth : I sought Him, but I found Him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me : to whom I said, Saw ye Him Whom my soul loveth? *It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him Whom my soul loveth.*”

Others hear His knocking and at once are moved, half-longing and half-frightened. *They begin at once to try and make the place fit for Him to come in.* Ah ! when we do that, despair is not far away, we ourselves are so weak, and all within us is so wrong. We sigh and turn away. “Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof ;” or perhaps we even pray with Peter,

“Depart from me : for I am a sinful man.” And yet He knocketh, still entreating us—“Open unto Me and I will come in.” It is our very helplessness which moves His pity—our need hastens His steps. Our very failure gives urgency and importunity to His love.

But most commonly perhaps, we keep the Blessed Master out of the heart by *receiving His gifts and never expecting HIM*. We think of Christ as One who died on the Cross long since, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, and through Him we receive our forgiveness. We think of Him as gone up into heaven in great glory, and now at the right hand of the Father He is our advocate, through Whom we have the hope of life everlasting. But knowing this only can neither satisfy Him nor us. Then only do we know the joys of our religion, richest, fullest, best, when we find our salvation not *through Him*, but *IN HIM*. He would have us know Him, and love Him, and rest in Him, as Brother, Saviour, Conqueror, everything. His gifts are given only that we may

have Himself. The guest chamber is taken and furnished only that He may sup with us. Without Himself His very gifts wither and die. We lose them or abuse them. "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," is a perilous request. The Lord Himself is *the* gift of God, and in having Him I have all ; and I can only find the gifts I long for in His presence. Faith is mine when I see Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Love is mine when He is mine, Who is Himself all love. Power is mine when He is with me, Who has all power in heaven and in earth. Then only am I consecrated, sanctified, set apart for God, when He comes in to dwell within me.

Lo, *He* standeth now *at the very threshold*. *He* knocketh at the door. "Open unto Me," saith He. Claim just now His gracious will concerning you. Your part is but to open the door of the heart. Stay your mind on His sure promise, "I WILL COME IN."

So Christ seeks for our closest heart communion.

The next verse comes as the wondrous perpetuating and completion of this Friendship : " Behold, I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit WITH ME IN MY THRONE.*"



Three Ways into Canaan

*MANY people never get into Canaan because they
spend all their time in looking for the boundary line
—and very often there is none.*



CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

Three Ways into Canaan.

THE land of Canaan is the chosen and constant type of the matured religious life—a life of rest, and peace, and triumph; a land where God's favour shines upon us steadfastly, and where the fruits of the Spirit can grow in rich abundance. It is the contrast, not only with the bondage of Egypt, but with the wanderings in the wilderness. There are two or three points in the type that it will be well for us to dwell upon.

Canaan was the end and purpose of all God's

dealings with Israel in Egypt. From the first this was set clearly before them. The promise to Abraham was that after his seed had served as strangers in a land that was not theirs, "in the fourth generation they shall come hither again." Tradition would, doubtless, hand down this prophecy to the people of Israel during their sojourn in Egypt, keeping alive some faint hope in their deepest gloom. When God comes to help His people He speaks to Moses as if this were the one purpose which He was about to accomplish. "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters ; for I know their sorrows ; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." (Ex. iii. 7, 8.)

God recognised this as the covenant which He had made with their fathers : "*I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob ;*

and I will give it you for an heritage." (Ex. vi. 8.)

So then Israel marched out of Egypt, with all their hope and expectation set on Canaan. They were delivered from Egypt that they might be led up to the goodly land. How clearly this was understood, and how fully expected, is plain from their language on the very shores of the Red Sea, in which they already claim it exultingly as their own.

Thus they started, convinced that the land of Canaan was the only end of their journey; and never dreaming that they were going to stop short of it.

And note further, that *Canaan was meant for every one of them*. It was not intended to be the high privilege of a few brave and adventurous spirits. It was not a reward for the more eminent and saintly amongst them. The arrangements were all such that every man and woman and child was to go straight up into the land and settle there.

Then, again, everything along the way impressed upon them the fact that *there was no resting-place short of Canaan*. The tent life ; the manna from heaven ; the water from the rock ; the moving pillar of fire and cloud ; the dreary discomforts of the wilderness itself ; the daily wanderings : all told them that this was not their rest. Moreover, many of the very commandments of God were such as could be fulfilled only in a settled land, and frequently this explanation was added, " Thus shall ye do when ye are come into the land whither ye go."

Now we stand as Israel stood, heirs of one great promise, with one great purpose waiting its fulfilment for our sakes. The Scriptures set before us only one idea of religion, and that is *Holiness*. We are forgiven that we may be holy. We, like Israel, are " delivered out of the hand of our enemies, that we might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." Our faith in Christ is to lead us up into a land, this side of heaven, in

which we are to rejoice evermore ; to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks ;—a land in which we are to rise with Christ into a newness of life, and to sit in heavenly places with Him. We are to get to a place of victory over sin, and where we are to be careful for nothing. Christ, the glorious and ever present, is to be our heart's satisfaction. In Him we are to find a King Whose rule in everything is our delight ; a Friend Whose presence is our strength and joy ; a Saviour Whose power to save is proved to the uttermost,—an uttermost that reaches downward and upward, as well as onward for ever and ever.

Let us set this before us very plainly. All the love of God to me in Christ ; all that the Lord has done for me by His life and death and resurrection and ascension ; all that the Holy Spirit has wrought within me, is for this one thing—my being made holy. This religion that I have is to lead me up to dwell in a land that the Lord careth for, a land where I may find His favour compass-

ing me about as with a shield ; where I shall prove myself more than conqueror through Him that loved me, and where I am to observe and do all the law of the Lord my God. Do not think about holiness as a strange and exceptional thing. It is meant for every one of us, and it is the direct end and meaning of all that God has done for us and in us.

And there is no rest for us this side of holiness. Our experience will have in it a strain of disappointment ; it is not up to the New Testament sample ; doubts find many a lodging-place in us, for there is more of the wilderness than the land flowing with milk and honey ; more of fear than triumph. The heart is distracted between alternate lustings after the old life and timid desires for the better. We can find no dwelling-place, no home for our souls, wandering without any progress ; going on and yet as far off as ever ; a parched earth and a brazen sky, with unbelief muttering at the elbow and tugging at the heart-strings—religion is a melancholy failure this side

of the Canaan life of holiness. The glowing promises and pictures of blessedness point further on. Christ's purpose concerning me is not forgiveness only. Forgiveness is to lead up to a life of rest, a life of power, a life of victory in Him. There seems to be a kind of religion that takes away nothing but the *sting* of sin. No words are strong enough to expose the delusion of those who are content with a religion which is anything other than *a deliverance from sinning*. Beware of putting emotions, creeds, modes of worship, religious exercises of any kind, in place of this. Such a religion is a delusion of the arch-deceiver himself, to us a peril, and to God an insult. I can never have known any true communion with God if it have not left within me a deepened hatred of that which is evil, and a greater longing for that which is good. How can I ever have seen the crucified Lord if the sight have not made me detest and dread that which has slain the King of Glory? Let us doubt everything sooner than believe in a religion which does not make sin a

more foul and loathsome thing to us than ever it was before. It is nothing, and worse than nothing, if it does not give us a new spiritual consciousness, a new standard of duty, a new light revealing the blackness and curse of sin. Religion means first of all *righteousness*—that first, not escape from hell, not getting to heaven, not being happy, but *being saved from sinning*. We cannot afford to have any other thought of religion than this.

Again, *Canaan is the place of Israel's development*. All the glorious promises of their prosperity and greatness could only begin when Israel was settled in Canaan. There they must claim the land and appoint judges and administer the law, and lay the foundation of an importance that was to be felt by all nations. The wilderness state was the transfer of the vine that could have its root only in Canaan. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled

the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river." (Ps. lxxx.)

Do not think of holiness as the far-off top and crown of the Christian life. Holiness is its true starting-point. Some almost resent the thought of *seeking* holiness. It is to them something far up on the last step from earth heavenward, and only to be reached by a *growth* which we can neither hinder nor help; and which is imperilled by convulsive efforts to obtain it. But our place is not to grow *into grace*; we are to grow *in it*. The grace of God is to be the rich deep soil *in which* we are to grow. The settled abiding in Christ is not the fruit of our growth; it is the only condition of our growth and fruit-bearing. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine; ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can

do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." *Holiness is only that life of abiding in Christ.*

THE WAY FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

The map is the expositor here. As Canaan is the type of our triumph in Christ, so Egypt is the type of the world—the place where they looked *down* for their supply. "The land which thou wateredst with thy foot" (see the contrast in Deut. xi. 10, 11, 12), the land which knew not God. Canaan was the vineyard fenced about, cut off from all nations, though lying in the very midst of them all. Shut in from Assyria by that strange formation of the Jordan valley; cut off from Egypt by the desert; cut off from Phoenicia by the ranges of the Lebanon mountains; cut off from Greece and Rome by a seaboard without a harbour; a land that God had shut in for His own people; "a land that drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord are always upon it,

from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

Now from Egypt to Canaan there are at least three ways, perhaps many more. There certainly are three marked and typical ways from the land that knows not God to the land of triumph in Him—three well-trodden and sharply defined. Because they have thought only of one way, and that the furthest round, very many earnest souls have been perplexed and troubled in this matter of Holiness.

Set the map of Egypt and Canaan before you, and you will see that the common and easiest way from one country to the other was by the coast through Gaza. It is the direct route following the shores of the Mediterranean and coming into Canaan through the land of the Philistines. That was the regular beaten track between Canaan and Egypt. By that way Abraham went, and Joseph, and Jacob, and his sons. By that way the treasurer drove when Philip was sent to preach to him.

Now in this route there was no Red Sea experience, and there was no Jordan. There was no awful manifestation of God's presence in dividing the sea ; no thunder and lightning, and no stars fighting in their courses.

Do let us believe that God has many ways into Canaan. With some the transition is very sharply marked ; it is a matter of earthquakes, whirlwinds, convulsions ; with another the way is a noiseless leading onward from day to day, so gentle and quiet a path that when they hear of the terrors of the Red Sea, and the marvels of Jordan, they doubt if they ever knew anything about it. Do not set up any ideal experience as the only one. Neither the passage of the Red Sea nor the Jordan was needful to get from Egypt to Canaan. It is plain that if all had been such men as Moses and Joshua and Caleb, they would have gone the nearer way. "It came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near : for God said, Lest per-

adventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea."

Let us learn that the Red Sea route is not the only one into Canaan, for some it is even out of the way. We may get up by way of Gaza ; it is as good a way as any.

The second way went into Canaan across the Red Sea, and then right on without touching the Jordan ; from Kadesh Barnea the people of Israel could have passed up immediately into the land of Canaan, far down to the south of the Dead Sea. If they had all been Joshuas and Calebs, they would have gone in here, and not have known anything about the Jordan at all.

Then the third way was that by which Israel came in after years of wandering in the wilderness, by the way of Jordan over against Jericho.

Now let the three ways teach us that there is no need to spend years of wandering in the wilderness, that there is no need for us to require vast

and overwhelming manifestations of God's power, and yet that God is able and willing with infinite patience to bring in the dull, slow, faint-hearted people.

Above all, do not let us think about any kind of experience or manifestation whatever as *necessary* to holiness. We have nothing to do with the way ; that is for our Leader to decide. Do not doubt yourself, do not doubt others, because the ways differ. He who comes by way of the Red Sea must not look down upon him who comes by way of Gaza. He who has never gone down into the Jordan must not doubt because other people do. He who comes by Gaza misses the rapture of the Red Sea triumph, but what of that ? He goes by a shorter route into the goodly land. He who comes by Kadesh Barnea misses the Jordan marvels, but what of that ? He has missed the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. The way is no concern of ours.

Let us earnestly inquire as to that which was essential to Israel's coming by any route into

Canaan, whether by Gaza, or by Kadesh Barnea, or by the passage of the Jordan.

(1) *An earnest acceptance of God's purposes.* All the route began there. They must listen to the voice of the Lord. "Out of Egypt have I called My son;" that call heeded and obeyed is the first step. Moses at first was rejected by the people as their deliverer, and they had forty years of further bondage. Put this first. God seeks to bring us up into Canaan, the goodly land. Are we willing to go? Do we hear His voice, and do we yield ourselves to Him for the fulfilment of His high purposes? That is the first step towards Canaan.

(2) *A very distinct recognition of the way of salvation and a whole-hearted confidence in it.* Whichever way they went, every man who marched towards Canaan marched out from under the blood. There are many ways, but there is only one door. There is no setting out for Canaan but from under the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. There must be an absolute reliance upon the

blood of Christ as the only ground of our salvation. That and that only comes between us and the curse of our sins. And every man had to eat the flesh of the lamb. Christ must be received and trusted in; we must feed upon Him in our hearts. In Him we must find deliverance from the bondage of our sins, and in Him we are to find strength for service.

(3) Each way required an *absolute dependence upon God to bring them in*. There were many difficulties by each route from which He only could deliver them. They had to get away from the cruel task-masters, and from the might of Pharaoh, and of themselves they could do nothing. In all the way of their journey they had to trust God to guide them and to feed them, and to drive out from before them the mighty inhabitants of Canaan. Thus there was to be a complete committing of themselves, and their wives, and their children, and their all, into His keeping and guidance. That is almost Canaan itself, when we have learnt the blessedness of this restful reliance

upon the might of Jehovah to bring us up into the goodly land, to deliver us from all our enemies and to supply all our need.

(4) Whichever way they went, *they had to get up and go on.* There must be journeying. All arrangements were made for that. They stood having the staff in hand, and the garment rolled about the waist, and sandals on the feet, ready to follow as the Lord should lead. They must part with everything that hindered that—they never would have got to Canaan without that. No matter whether they went by Gaza, or by Kadesh Barnea, or by Jordan, they must get up and go on. That pilgrimage was their one great business. They waited on the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire; day and night they were ready to strike the tents and be off to a further camping ground. Ah—there we often fail. We put the blood on the door and think we are all right. There we abide, and not only do not get to Canaan, but very often we do not even get out of Egypt. There must be this actual surrender of ourselves

to the Lord to be led of Him. We must *seek* first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. We must *dwell in tents*, suffering nothing to get such a hold of us that we become rooted and grounded either in Egypt or in the Wilderness.

We must get up and come out of Egypt. Whichever way they went, there was to be a very real *separation* between them and Egypt. Either the Red Sea must cut them off; or the great and terrible wilderness; or the way to Gaza, "which is desert."

(5) *There must be the appropriation of Canaan.* By whichever way they might get there, they had to enter in and claim it in the name of the Lord. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon have I given you." In the name of our glorious Captain and Saviour, we have to put our foot down. The tread of assurance, the march of triumph, is to be ours. These conditions are essential. Do not let us hinder ourselves with perplexities as to the way. Give yourself only right up to Him who saith, *I am the Way.*

And yet further, do not imagine all kinds of difficulties and then fear as to what you will do in them. We are told that there must be an entire and complete consecration of ourselves. Truly, but do not stand for ever fearing that the surrender is not complete—simply and earnestly give yourself as you are to Christ, and ask Him to make it complete. We are told that Christ will not come into the heart unless He is to be supreme. Truly, but do not wait fearing that He will *not* be. *I will come in* is the word of His Grace. Let Him come in, and He will secure His own supremacy. Some tell us that we shall lose the blessing unless we confess it. Well, receive Him, and He will teach us the time to speak and the time to be silent. Many fear to seek lest they should lose it—stay your mind on receiving HIM, and then trust *His* Power to keep that which is *committed unto Him*. Many fear to receive Christ fully, doubting their own power of entertaining Him. Can they always be thinking of Him, with so much to think of as they always have? Can they always

be waiting upon Him? Ah, how it must grieve our dear and blessed Master that His children should think of His service as such a hard one! Listen to the music of the twenty-third psalm—what is the song? *He leadeth me until I am very tired, and then He lets me lie down*—that is our version of it. But that is not the Good Shepherd. Listen: *He maketh me to lie down. THEN He leadeth me.* Hear again His own words: *I will give you rest. THEN learn of Me.* The first thing He seeks is that we shall be so at home with Him as to forget all about the entertaining—to be at ease with Him, at perfect rest. He seeks love—true, homeliest love—and not a stately etiquette. “Fear not,” is ever His gracious watchword. Victory is pledged to us; it is ours now to claim it. The goodly land of Canaan, of conquest, of rest, of abundant fruitfulness, of God’s abiding presence, and of a perfect service, is ours if we will have it. NOW, in the Lord’s name, let us go up at once and possess it, for in His strength we are well able to overcome.



